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BELISARIUS.

A TALE.

BY

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Non miror, ſi quando impetum capit (Deus) ſpectandi magnos viros colluctantes cum aliqua calamitate.
SENECA de Provid.

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I AM certain, and ought not to diſſemble, that the world may look upon the foundation of this little performance, rather as a popular opinion than an hiſtorical truth. But this opinion has been ſo prevalent, and the idea of the blind and begging Beliſarius is become ſo familiar, that he is ſcarcely ever viewed but in the light I have placed him.

In every thing elſe, except a few particulars, I have faithfully followed hiſtory, and Procopius has been my guide. But I have not paid the leaſt regard to that ſcandalous libel which is aſcribed to him under the title of *Anecdotes* or *Secret Hiſtory*. That indigeſted maſs of groſs abuſe and palpable falſehood is to me ſufficient evidence that this is not the work of Procopius, but the product of ſome paltry declaimer, equally wicked and weak.

No one of the writers in the age of Procopius who followed him, for the ſpace of five hundred years, make mention of theſe anecdotes. Agathias, contemporary with our author, in enumerating his works, ſays not a word of this. They chooſe to conceal it, they may tell me; yet at leaſt three hundred years after it ought to have been publiſhed: the learned Photius ſhould have known it: but it is certain he never did. Suidas, a writer of the eleventh century, is the firſt who gives this contemptible ſatire to Procopius, and the moſt part of the learned, without further inquiry, have repeated what Suidas hath ſaid. Some, however, have doubted that this was the work of our author, others have flatly denied it: and of this number is Eichelius in the preface and remarks on his edition of that book. He ſets out with ſhewing, that it is neither true nor probable that Procopius could be the author; and adds, that ſuppoſing he were, ſuch abuſive, ſhameful, and ridiculous declamation was utterly unworthy of credit. It is indeed aſtoniſhing, that the illuſtrious author of the Spirit of Laws ſhould pay ſuch reſpect to a libel manifeſtly forged. I well know the weight of ſuch an authority; but even that muſt yield to the force of truth. Is it indeed credible that a ſtateſman, a man much reſpected by the age in which he lived, merely for the pleaſure of traducing them who loaded him with favours, ſhould chooſe ſo far to diſgrace himſelf as to oblige poſterity to conſider him either as a malicious libeller, or guilty of the moſt ſervile flattery? Is it credible that a writer, in other reſpects ſo judicious, could have been ſo totally loſt to ſenſe and ſhame, as to deſire poſterity to take, on his bare aſſertion, Juſtinian, the wiſe and virtuous old man, for a beſotted fellow, for a crazy, clowniſh idiot? even that very Juſtinian who, from the moſt obſcure and meaneſt ſtation in the army, by his valour and extraordinary talents, raiſed himſelf to the higheſt office and honour, and, at laſt, by the joint ſuf-

frages of the ſenate, the people, and the army, was elected emperor. Who can believe that a man, who had written the hiſtory of his time with ſo much candour, dignity and knowledge, could thus ſay of Juſtinian, "that he was ſtupid and ſluggiſh as an aſs, "which ſuffers itſelf to be led by the halter, and at the ſame time "pricks up its ears; that he was not a man, but a fury; that his "mother boaſted of having commerce with a demon before ſhe "conceived him; and that he had done ſo much miſchief to the "empire, that no age could produce ſo many nor ſo great calami-"ties?" Is it to be believed that, after having repreſented Beliſarius as an accompliſhed hero, graced with triumphs and loaded with glory, he durſt preſume to paint him weak and wicked, deſpiſed by the whole world, and treated as a madman; and all this at the very time of his greateſt glory, when by chaſing the Huns from Thrace, he was acknowledged the ſaviour of the empire?

Thoſe who imagine they can trace in the original Greek, the ſtyle of Procopius, do they at the ſame time diſcover his ſagacity and good ſenſe? Suppoſe him mad, wicked, and ungrateful to his benefactors, yet could he think childiſh declamations alone ſufficient both to recal his former panegyrics, and overthrow the facts on which they were built? That the hiſtorian Procopius ſhould ſeriouſly engage to prove in form, that Juſtinian and his miniſters were not men, but demons in human ſhape? Of ſuch inconſiſtent folly I ſhould hardly believe him capable, though all his contemporary writers had atteſted it: much greater reaſon have I now to doubt, when the fact depends ſolely upon the dubious teſtimony of a ſingle man; of a man who lived five hundred years after him.

The work falſely aſcribed to Procopius I have not at all minded: it is only his authentic hiſtory I have conſulted, and from thence taken the character of my hero, his modeſty, his goodneſs, his affability, his benevolence, his exceſſive artleſſneſs; but, above all, that unparalleled humanity, the foundation of all his other virtues, and which made him the object of the people's adoration. "The citizens of Byzantium," ſays he, "took the "greateſt pleaſure in looking upon Beliſarius as he walked daily "forth to the forum. A comely and graceful perſon, a noble "and majeſtic ſtature adorned this hero. So humble, ſo affable, "ſo eaſy of acceſs, that in theſe things he reſembled one of the "loweſt rank. In munificence towards his ſoldiers he exceeded "all. Towards the labourers and peaſants his care and indulgence "was ſuch, that when Beliſarius led, they followed and felt "no pain. The corn whilſt in the fields he carefully protected "from the injuries of the cavalry; and not a ſoldier durſt touch "the other fruits without the conſent of the owners."

BELISARIUS.

CHAP. I.

IN the age of Juſtinian, the empire, weakened by long and violent ſtruggles, haſtened to its ruin. Every part of the adminiſtration was neglected: laws were diſregarded, the finances ſquandered, and military diſcipline was totally deſpiſed. The emperor, weary of war, purchaſed with his gold a ſhameful peace from his enemies; whilſt his few remaining troops loitered in inaction, uſeleſs, yet expenſive to the ſtate; and their commanders, wholly devoted to pleaſure, renewed their warlike ideas, and at the ſame time diſpelled the languors of idleneſs in the exerciſe of the chaſe.

One night, after this diverſion, when a few of theſe young captains were ſupping together at a caſtle in Thrace, a blind old man, led by a child, ſtood at the door, entreating their hoſpitality. Youth is eaſily moved to compaſſion; they cauſed him to enter. It was now autumn; and the cold, which was already ſet in, had ſeized the old man; they therefore ordered him to ſit by the fire.

Supper was not yet ended; the chiefs were in full ſpirits; and their converſation turned on the evils of the ſtate. This was indeed a large field for cenſure; and here diſappointed vanity gave itſelf looſe reins. Each exaggerated his paſt actions; and boaſted of what he might ſtill have done, had not his ſervices been deſpiſed and his talents diſregarded. Every evil that befel the empire, in their eſtimation, was owing to the neglect of placing ſuch men as themſelves at the head of affairs. Thus did they govern the world over their cups, and each glaſs brought an increaſe of infallibility to their ſchemes.

The old man, ſitting at the corner of the fire, liſtened and ſmiled with pity. One of them perceived it, and thus ſpoke:—'And have you, good man, the preſumption to treat what we are ſaying as ridiculous?' 'Not as ridiculous,'

replied the old man, 'but as a little trifling, as is natural to your age.' The reply confounded them. 'You imagine you have reaſon to complain,' continued he, 'and I alſo think it is wrong to neglect you; but this is the leaſt of our evils. Lament, indeed, that the empire has loſt its power and its glory; that a prince, worn out with cares and old age, is obliged to ſee with another's eyes, and to employ unfaithful hands in his ſervice. But, in this general calamity, is it worth while to think of one's ſelf?' 'In your time,' replied one at the table, 'was it the cuſtom for people not to be concerned for themſelves? Well, what of that; times change, for now it is the chief care.'—'So much the worſe,' ſaid the old man; 'and if this then be your caſe, to neglect you is to do you juſtice.'—'Is it to inſult people,' ſaid the youth, 'that you aſk their hoſpitality?' 'I do not inſult you,' replied the old man; 'I ſpeak as a friend, and I pay for my ſanctuary by telling you the truth.'

The young Tiberius, afterwards the virtuous emperor, then in the company, was ſtruck with the venerable aſpect and gray hairs of this blind man. 'You ſpeak to us,' ſaid he, 'with wiſdom; but with a little too much ſeverity: you require us to devote ourſelves to our country; this, to be ſure, is an exalted virtue; but, at the ſame time, it is no duty.'—'It is a duty you owe your country,' replied the old man with firmneſs; 'or rather it is the foundation of your duties and of every military virtue. Whoever devotes himſelf to the ſervice of his country, ſhould ſuppoſe her inſolvent; for what he hazards for her is ineſtimable. But he muſt, at the ſame time, expect to find her ungrateful; for whoever looks for a reward for a free and generous ſacrifice of himſelf is fooliſhly inconſiſtent. There is nothing but the love of glory, and an enthuſiaſm for virtue, that is worthy of animating you. And what matters it, then, how your ſervices are received? Your recompenſe is independent on the caprice of a miniſter, or the diſcernment of the ſovereign. The common ſoldier, indeed, may be induced by the hopes of booty; he may hazard his life for a pittance to maintain it. This I readily

readily comprehend; but you, ſir, born to affluence, with whom to live is to enjoy, when you relinquiſh the ſofter ſcenes of life to undergo fatigue and labour, oppoſing yourſelf voluntarily to various perils, can you derogate ſo far from the generous act, as to deſire wages for it? It is depreciated by payment: who attends to the advantage of ſalary, is a mercenary ſlave; nor is the caſe altered by the quantity of reward; the man who appriſes his talents, and converts them to profit, is to the full as venal as the ſoul that ſells itſelf for a piece of money. What I have ſaid of pecuniary recompenſe, I affirm alſo of the allurements of ambition: honours, titles, rank, and the favours of the ſovereign, what are they but wages? He who deſires them has his hire. We muſt either give or ſell ourſelves: there is no other alternative. The former is the act of freedom, the latter of ſlavery: you, gentlemen, will incline to that which agrees beſt with the propenſities of your heart.'—'At this rate, honeſt friend,' ſaid the company, 'you place ſovereigns in a very eaſy condition.'—'Were my diſcourſe addreſſed to ſovereigns,' returned the blind ſtranger, 'I ſhould tell them, that as it is your duty to obſerve a diſintereſted conduct, ſo it is theirs to be juſt and upright.'—'What, then, is it juſt, do you think, to give merit its due recompenſe?'—'Moſt certainly it is; but he to whom ſervice is rendered, is to diſpenſe the reward; and if he omit to do it, it is his misfortune. But to go a little further: which of us, in weighing our own merits, can be ſure of holding the balance with an even hand? To illuſtrate this; in your condition, for inſtance, in order that every body ſhould be dealt with to his ſatisfaction, it would be neceſſary that each ſhould command in chief, and then what becomes of ſubordination? This, you ſee, is impracticable. Let me, then, aſſume it as a truth, that government may incidentally want penetration, and even equity; but ſtill it will be more diſcerning and wiſe in its appointments, than if it were implicitly to take the recommendation each of you would give in favour of himſelf.'—'And who are you that talk to us in this ſtrain?' ſays the young maſter of the feaſt, with an elevation of voice.—'Beliſarius,' replied the old man. The

The ſurpriſe occaſioned by this diſcovery need not be expreſſed: the aſtoniſhment and confuſion that ſeized their young minds at the name of Beliſarius, at the name of him who had ſo often conquered in three parts of the globe, will ſuggeſt themſelves to every imagination. The whole company remained motionleſs, and a deep ſilence marked the reſpect with which they were impreſſed. Reverential awe poſſeſſed them; and, forgetting that Beliſarius was blind, not one of them dared to lift up his eyes. Tiberius at length broke ſilence: 'Thou venerable man,' ſaid he, 'how unjuſt and cruel has fortune been to thee, to thee, whom the whole empire, for thirty years together, felt the author of its glory and its flouriſhing condition; till, at length, wicked malice framed a charge of treaſon and revolt! Thou art that hero, whom the perſecuting rage of envious men loaded with irons, and barbarouſly deprived of the organs of ſight! And yet, thus baſely treated, you can ſtill perſevere to inculcate the principles of public ſpirit and diſintereſted love of country!'—'And from whom,' ſays Beliſarius, 'would you expect to hear the leſſons of virtue? Are the ſlaves of court favours to be your moraliſts?'—'Oh! ſhame indelible!' ſays Tiberius, interrupting him; 'unparalleled ingratitude! Poſterity will ſcarce believe the monſtrous ſtory!'—'It muſt not be diſſembled,' replied Beliſarius, 'that my enemies did take me unprovided, and ſurpriſe me a little: I never expected to be injured to that exceſs of outrage. I had, however, been familiar with the idea of dying in the ſervice of the empire; and whether dead or blind, the difference is inconſiderable. Devoted to my country, I did not except my eyes. All that I hold dearer than my eyes or my life ſtill remains to me; the honour of my character is inviolate, and, above all, the virtues of my heart are ſtill mine, unconquered by my enemies. The actions of my life may indeed be effaced from the memory of a court; but the memory of mankind will be more retentive; and if it ſhould not, I have the conſcious remembrance, and that is ſufficient.'

The company, now ſtruck with admiration, ſolicited Beliſarius to make one at the table. 'Excuſe me, gentlemen,'

men,' ſays he, 'at my age the beſt place is the fire ſide.' Every civility was tendered to him, and he was much importuned to accept the beſt bed in the caſtle: he contented himſelf with a little ſtraw. 'I have often ſlept harder,' ſays he: 'but this child, who guides me, I recommend to your good offices; for he is more delicate than I am.'

The next morning, as ſoon as there was light enough for his guide, Beliſarius departed, before his hoſts, fatigued with the ſport of the preceding day, were yet awake. Being informed when they roſe that the hero had left the place, they propoſed to go in queſt of him, in order to provide him with a carriage, and whatever conveniences he might want. 'No,' ſays Tiberius, 'that will be labour in vain; Beliſarius has not conceived eſteem enough for us, to make him willing to receive an obligation.'

The young Tiberius had ſenſibility and reflection; on his mind an exalted virtue in the very extreme of misfortune made the deepeſt impreſſion. 'Never,' ſays he to one of his friends who came to him from the emperor, 'never ſhall I forget laſt night's ſolemn ſcene! never ſhall the words of the venerable man be eraſed from my memory. Humiliating as he was, yet his leſſon has taught me what a taſk remains upon my hands, if I aſpire to the dignity of my nature, if I mean to be a man.' An account of this incident reached the ear of Juſtinian, who deſired an interview with Tiberius.

Tiberius related the whole with accuracy to the emperor; 'and then,' continued he, 'it is impoſſible, ſir, that ſo elevated a mind could deſcend to the baſeneſs of the conſpiracy laid to his charge: I would engage my life that he is innocent, if a life like mine were worthy of being ſurety for ſo illuſtrious a character.'—'I will ſee him, and confer with him: in the condition of blindneſs, to which he is reduced, this will not be impracticable. Since his releaſe from priſon, he cannot have removed himſelf to any conſiderable diſtance: purſue his ſteps, and intice him, if poſſible, to your country-ſeat; thither I will come in private.' This command of the emperor, Tiberius received

ceived with tranſport, and the next day purſued the road Beliſarius had taken.

CHAP. II.

BELISARIUS, in the mean time, begging alms as he went, journeyed on towards an old ruinous caſtle, where his family expected him. He had given directions to his young guide not to mention his name upon the road; but the dignified air of his countenance, and his whole perſon, was ſufficient to intereſt every beholder. Arriving that night at a village, his conductor ſtopped at the door of an houſe which had a ſimple but neat appearance.

The landlord was entering with a ſpade in his hand: the mien and features of Beliſarius attracted his attention, and made him curious to know ſo reſpectable a vagrant.—'A poor invalid,' ſays Beliſarius, 'an old decript ſoldier!'—'A ſoldier!' exclaims the villager, 'and that honour is your recompenſe!'—'There is no help for it,' replied Beliſarius; 'the greateſt misfortune of a ſovereign is his inability to pay the price of all the blood ſpilt in his ſervice.' The heart of the villager was touched by this anſwer, and Beliſarius was invited to partake of his hoſpitality.

'I here introduce,' ſays the maſter of the houſe to his wife, 'a gallant brave veteran, who bears the ſeverities of his fate with fortitude of mind:' then turning to Beliſarius, 'My honeſt gueſt, be not aſhamed of your condition in a family which has been inured to misfortunes: ſit you down, we are going to ſupper; while we wait to have it laid upon the table, tell me, pray what wars have you ſerved in?' 'In the wars of Italy,' ſays Beliſarius, 'againſt the Goths, that in Aſia againſt the Perſians, and in Africa againſt the Vandals and the Moors.'

At theſe words the villager could not ſuppreſs a deep ſigh.—'At this rate then,' continued he, 'you made every campaign with Beliſarius?'—'Yes, every campaign; we were never aſunder.'—'Indeed! that excellent man! the equal compoſure of his mind! that conſtant uprightneſs!

neſs! that greatneſs of ſoul! Is he ſtill living, pray? for in this ſolitude it is about five and twenty years ſince I have heard what is doing in the world.'—'Yes, Beliſarius is ſtill alive.'—'May heaven guard and prolong his days!'—'If he heard your wiſhes for him, your goodneſs would affect him tenderly.'—'Very like; and how do they ſay he fares at court? In great power to be ſure! adored by every body!'—'Alas! envy is ever an attendant on proſperity'—'Very true; but the emperor ſhould be upon his guard againſt the enemies of ſo great a man, the tutelary genius, the protector of the empire!'—'He is far gone in years now.'—'But what then? he will be as great in council, as he was formerly in the field. His wiſdom, if he is attended to, may, perhaps, be of more extenſive uſe than even his valour.'—'And how,' ſays Beliſarius, inwardly ſoftened, 'how was he known to you?'—'Let us ſit down to table,' anſwered the villager: 'your queſtion would lead into a long detail.'

Beliſarius now felt ſome ſecret hints that his landlord muſt be ſome officer who had formerly ſerved under him, and had reaſon to be contented with his general. During ſupper, the latter was inquiſitive concerning the events of war in Italy and the Eaſt, but was totally ſilent in regard to Africa. Beliſarius gratified his curioſity in a plain and ſimple ſtyle.—'Let us drink,' ſays the hoſt, at the concluſion of the repaſt, 'let us drink to the health of your general, and may heaven requite him with its bounty for all the evil he heaped on me!'—'He!' replied Beliſarius, 'did he injure you?'—'He diſcharged his duty, and I make no complaint. I have learned in the ſchool of adverſity to compaſſionate the diſtreſſes of mankind, and you ſhall know, my honeſt friend, how that leſſon was taught me. As you have ſerved in Africa, you have ſeen the king of the Vandals, the unfortunate Gilimer, led by Beliſarius in triumph to Conſtantinople, with his wife and children involved in his captivity. That very Gilimer has opened to you his hoſpitable door! you have ſupped with him!'—'Thou Gilimer!' exclaimed Beliſarius; 'and has not the emperor aſſigned you a better lot?—

lot?—He had promiſed'—'Yes, he promiſed, and, to do him juſtice, he kept his word. Dignities were offered to me, and even the rank of a Patrician; but I declined the offer. To him who has been a king, and has loſt his crown, the only reſource is obſcurity and repoſe.' —'Thou Gilimer!'—'Yes, I am he! that vanquiſhed prince, who you may remember, was beſieged upon the mountain of Papua. There I ſuffered unheard of hardſhips, the inclemency of the winter ſeaſon, the neceſſities of famine, the miſerable aſpect of a whole people driven to the laſt deſpair, and ready to devour their very wives and children; the unremitting vigilance of that brave officer Pharas, who even amidſt the operations of the ſiege he carried on, never ceaſed by his remonſtrances to awaken my feelings both for myſelf and the miſeries of my people: all theſe circumſtances, together with the entire confidence I had in the uprightneſs of your general, prevailed upon me at length to lay down my arms. With what an air of ſober dignity did Beliſarius receive me! Every proper attention was paid to me by his direction. With what addreſs, with what reſpect, did he ſtrive to ſoften my affliction! The ſpace of near ſix luſtres has elapſed ſince I have dwelt in this ſolitary retreat, and not a day has paſſed without hearing my moſt fervent prayers for Beliſarius.'

'I perceive,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'in this account of yourſelf, the mild effects of that philoſophy, which even on the mountain, where you endured ſo much, could make you chant your calamities in ſong; which gave you, when you appeared before Beliſarius, that ſerenity of countenance; and on his day of triumph animated that look of magnanimity, which aſtoniſhed the emperor Juſtinian. 'My good gueſt,' replied Gilimer, 'the ſtrength and weakneſs of our mind depend entirely upon the light in which things appear to us. True conſtancy and fortitude firſt ſprung up in my heart, when I began to conſider the world as the ſport of fortune. Till then I had lived the moſt voluptuous of kings, diſſolved in luxury, and ever entranced in the lap of pleaſure: on a ſudden I paſſed

from

from my palace, that ſcene of revelry and delight, to the cavern of the Moors, where, pillowed upon ſtraw, I lived on barley coarſely pounded and half roaſted under the cinders. Nay, to ſuch hardſhip was I reduced, that a loaf of bread, ſent to me by the humanity of an enemy, was an ineſtimable preſent. From this ſituation I fell into captivity, was loaded with irons, and walked in the conqueror's triumph. In extremities like theſe, you will agree with me, that the heart muſt break with grief, or riſe ſuperior to the caprice of fortune.'

'You find in that compoſure of your ſoul,' ſays Beliſarius, 'many reſources againſt calamity; and I promiſe to ſuperadd a new motive of conſolation before we part.'

Their converſation ended here, and each retired to reſt.

Gilimer, at the dawn of day, inſtead of betaking himſelf to the cultivation of his garden, made it his firſt care to inquire how his aged gueſt had paſſed the night. He found him already up, with his ſtick in his hand, ready to ſet out on his journey. 'How!' ſaid he, 'not give us a few days before you leave us!'—'That,' replied Beliſarius, 'is not in my power: I have a wife and daughter inconſolable during my abſence. Farewel! and hear without emotion what remains to be told you. Blind and ſuperannuated as I am, Beliſarius will never forget the reception you have given him.'—'How! Beliſarius!'—'It is Beliſarius who now embraces you!'—'Righteous heaven!' exclaims Gilimer, half wild with aſtoniſhment; 'Beliſarius blind, and abandoned in his old age!'—'Even ſo,' replied Beliſarius; 'and to ſhew you the extreme of cruelty, before they turned him adrift to beg his way through the world, his enemies put out his eyes.'—'Amazement!' ſays Gilimer, in a tone of grief and horror; 'can it be poſſible? Who were the monſters?'—'Envious men,' replied Beliſarius; 'they impeached me of deſigns upon the crown, when my thoughts were fixed upon my grave. They had credit enough to ruin me, and I was laid in irons. The people at length clamoured loudly for my enlargement; it was in vain to reſiſt the popular outcry;

but in reſtoring me to liberty, they deprived me of my ſight. Juſtinian too ordained it; there the wound ſtruck deeper! You can witneſs with what zeal, with what affection, I ſerved him. Even now I love him, and grieve that he is ſurrounded by wicked men, who cloud and blacken the evening of his days. When I heard that he himſelf pronounced the definitive ſentence, I own my conſtancy failed me; the very executioners relented into pity, and fell proſtrate at my feet. Now all is over; and thanks be to heaven, I have but little time to crawl about, blind and wretched.'—'Paſs that time with me,' ſays Gilimer: 'here, under my roof, cloſe an illuſtrious life.' —'That,' returned Beliſarius, 'would have ſomething ſoothing in it; but I muſt give myſelf to my family, and I now go to expire in their arms. Farewel!'

Gilimer embraced him, bathed him with his tears, and could hardly quit his hold. At length he let him go with a parting pang, and ſtraining his eyes after him—'O proſperity!' ſays he, 'thou cheat, proſperity! who can confide in thee? The warlike hero, the great, the good Beliſarius! Now, indeed, he may think himſelf happy who digs his garden.'—With theſe words the king of the Vandals reſumed his ſpade.

CHAP. III.

BELISARIUS was now near the aſylum of his family, who expected him with impatience, when a new incident made him fear that he ſhould never reach it. The inhabitants upon the borders of the empire were perpetually making incurſions into Thrace. A party of the Bulgarians had invaded the confines, juſt as a rumour was ſpread abroad that Beliſarius, deprived of his eye-ſight, was diſcharged from priſon, and was begging his way to his exiled family. The idea of attaching to himſelf ſo conſiderable a man ſoon ſtruck the prince of Bulgaria, who little doubted but that Beliſarius would embrace the moſt rapid means of revenge. The road he had taken was known, and orders were accordingly iſſued for a diligent purſuit. Towards the cloſe

close of day Belisarius was overtaken: force was not to be resisted; he was obliged to mount a superb horse brought for the purpose. Two Bulgarians conducted him, and the hero's guide was obliged to mount behind one of them. 'You may trust to us,' said the Bulgarians; 'the prince our master honours your virtues and compassionates your misfortunes.' Belisarius interrogating what their prince wanted with him.—'He means,' replied the barbarians, 'to sate your vengeance with the blood of your enemies.'—'Ah!' says the old general, 'let him leave me unrevenged; his pity is superfluous and cruel. I only ask to die in the arms of my family, and you tear me from them. Whither would you lead me? I am harassed with fatigue, and rest is necessary to me.'—'Rest you shall have,' answered the Bulgarians, 'and to your entire satisfaction, if the master of the neighbouring castle should chance not to be upon his guard, or in case he does not prove armed with too strong a force.'

This castle was in the occupation of an old courtier, whose name was Bessus. He had commanded at Rome during a siege, and, after being guilty of the most horrible exactions, retired to this place with ten thousand talents*. Belisarius had insisted that he should be prosecuted with the utmost severity of the law; but those at court who do not wish to have matters too closely inspected, being all of his party, the inquiry was prevented, and Bessus retired to enjoy his crimes and his money in rural tranquillity.

Two Bulgarians, who had been dispatched to reconnoitre the place, reported to the chief, that in the castle all was pleasure and rejoicing; that the misfortune of Belisarius was the general talk; and that Bessus celebrated it by a day of festivity, as a punishment inflicted by heaven. 'The abject wretch!' said the Bulgarians, 'he shall not long have it in his power to triumph in the downfal of a great man like you.'

They arrived soon at the castle: Bessus was at table surrounded by his sycophants, one of whom sung a song

* About 250,000l. sterling.

of adulation, and in his ſtanzas ſet forth the care of heaven in the juſtification of his patron, by puniſhing the accuſer with the loſs of his ſight. What more manifeſt indication could there be! Could innocence enjoy a more ſplendid triumph! Beſſus applauded the flattering ſtrain, graciouſly obſerving, that heaven is always juſt, and that ſooner or later the wicked are brought to condign puniſhment. Beſſus was right in his obſervation; for now the Bulgarians, ſword in hand, had taken poſſeſſion of the court-yard, and leaving Beliſarius to the care of a few ſoldiers, made their way with hideous uproar to the banqueting-room. Beſſus turned pale at the ſight; confuſion and terror fell upon him; his gueſts were thrown into the utmoſt conſternation: without attempting a defence, they fell upon their knees and begged their lives. They were all inſtantly ſeized, and dragged forth to the place where Beliſarius was guarded. Beſſus, by the light of the torches, perceived on horſeback a blind old man; he immediately knew him, and beſeeched his mercy. The old general, ſoftened with tenderneſs, conjured the Bulgarians to ſpare him and his. 'No,' ſaid the chief, 'no mercy here for bad men!' This was the ſignal for ſlaughter, and Beſſus with all his comrades was put to death upon the ſpot. Then ordering all the domeſtics before him, the commander of the gang, who ſaw they expected the ſame fate, bid them be without fear, and attend him and his party at table; 'for now,' ſays he, 'we are your maſters.' He proceeded to regale himſelf with his followers, and Beliſarius was placed in the ſeat of Beſſus.

The viciſſitudes of fortune now engroſſed the thoughts of Beliſarius, and this laſt incident ſorely grieved him. 'My friends,' ſaid he to the Bulgarians, 'you diſtreſs me much by ſhedding the blood of my countrymen. Beſſus, it is true, was guilty of avarice and inhumanity: I have ſeen him the author of a famine at Rome, and in the midſt of the public miſery ſelling out bread at a moſt exorbitant price, without any feeling for the poor, who were unable to buy the neceſſaries of life. The juſtice

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of heaven has overtaken him at last, and my only regret is that he merited his fate: but yet this havoc, done in my name, is a stain to my honour. Either dispatch me, or promise that no outrage of this sort shall happen again while I am amongst you.' The Bulgarians engaged to restrain themselves for the future to self-defence; but Bessus' castle was plundered, and the next day the invaders, loaded with booty, set forward with Belisarius.

As soon as they arrived at their prince's camp, the commander in chief, embracing Belisarius, exclaimed, in a transport of joy, 'Come, thou venerable man, and try whether we or your own countrymen are the Barbarians! Abandoned by the state you served, you shall find among us both friends and revengers of your wrongs.' With this he led him by the hand to his tent, there bade him repose himself, and gave orders that every thing should favour his slumber. At night, after a sumptuous repast, at which the name of Belisarius was celebrated by all the Barbarian chiefs, the king withdrew with him to a private conference. He began by observing, that it was needless to remonstrate the cruelty of the treatment he had met with. 'The crime,' continued he, 'is horrible; the vengeance due to it should be the same. Your tyrant, with all his accomplices, must be buried under the ruins of the Imperial throne and palace: his city shall be wrapt in flames, and its fragments heaped upon the emperor's head. Be thou illustrious old man, be thou the guide of my armies; instruct me how to conquer, and to expiate your injuries. They have not robbed you of the mind's eye; the light of wisdom is still yours. Teach me how to rush upon them by surprise; to assault them within their ramparts. Let us exterminate their empire, and not leave a trace of it on this side of the seas. If the second rank in our new dominion will not suffice you, divide with me the imperial dignity; I agree to it. Let the tyrant of Byzantium, before he dies beneath repeated blows, behold you once more make your triumphant entry into his city.' —'And would you have me, then,' said Belisarius after

a pauſe, 'would you have me juſtify him for depriving me of my ſight? It is a long time, ſir, ſince I declined the offer of crowns. Carthage and Italy invited my acceptance. I was then young, and in the ſeaſon of ambition; perſecution even then began to ſhew itſelf, but I remained inviolably faithful to my prince and my country. The duty which then bound me continues unextinguiſhed; and nothing can induce me to renounce it. When I promiſed allegiance to the emperor, I hoped to find him juſt; and, if he proved otherwiſe, I made no reſervation of a tacit right to defend, much leſs to revenge myſelf. Of treaſon and revolt I am incapable; and, let me aſk, how would it ſerve you to brand me with perjury? What valuable ſervice can you expect from a blind old man, who has loſt the force and vigour of his mind? The enterpriſe you propoſe is much above my ability, perhaps above your own. In the preſent relaxed ſtate of government, the emperor ſeems an eaſy conqueſt; but he is only grown indolent; and perhaps, to rouſe him from his langour and reanimate his ſpirit, it were deſireable for him that an enterpriſe like yours ſhould be commenced. That city, which you think ſo aſſailable, is inhabited by a people trained to war: and then, what a ſet of men to lead them on! If the ſuperannuated Beliſarius may well nigh be numbered with the dead, yet Narſes lives, and even Narſes has for competitors Mundus, Hermes, Salomon, and many others of a warlike genius. If you will credit me, time alone, with its imperceptible hand, muſt ſap the foundations and work the downfal of that great empire. You may, indeed, commit a ravage, but that is but the war of robbers; your ambition will aſpire to an enterpriſe more worthy of you. Juſtinian deſires only to form alliances and confederacies in friendſhip; let me add, there is not a king who would not be honoured by an alliance with him; and, ſir, it depends upon yourſelf to'——'No,' interrupted the Bulgarian, 'I never will be the friend of Juſtinian; I will hold no alliance with the man who owes his all to you, and in return has blinded you for it.

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Will you reign in concert with me, the director of my councils, and the genius of my armies? That is the question between us.'—'My life,' replied Belisarius, 'is in your hands; but nothing can exempt me from the allegiance I owe to my lawful sovereign; even now, depressed as I am, had I the means of serving him, though it were against yourself, he might still be as sure of me as in my day of prosperity.'—'An extraordinary sort of virtue this!' says the Bulgarian.—'Woe to the people,' replied Belisarius, 'to whom it appears extraordinary! Don't you perceive that it is the foundation of good order in society? That no member of any community whatever should arrogate to himself a right to be his own judge and his own avenger, is an obvious, a self-evident truth. That right of nature is transferred to the magistrates; and were it otherwise, there would be as many rebels as discontented spirits. Would you, who now court me to punish my master for injustice, would you give the same privilege to your own soldiers?'—'Would I give it!' says the Bulgarian; 'they have it without my giving it; but fear restrains it within due bounds.'—'And with us, sir, virtue is the restraint,' says Belisarius; 'that is an advantage resulting from the manners; from manners formed by civilization, the parent of social happiness: and social happiness, let me tell you, will never be rightly understood, where the institutions of true policy have not been received. I will go deeper into this subject, with the freedom of a man who has nothing left to fear or hope. What sort of subjects do you govern, sir? A race inured to warfare; that is their best resource, and that every warfare to which they are trained, banishes every idea of a right use of peace; inclines them to neglect the valuable riches of labour and industry; to trample on the laws of natural justice, and seek a precarious good in ruin and destruction. If you will place before your eyes the consequences that must attend your boundless ambition, you will perceive how necessarily it results, that, to lay waste the territories of the empire, you must leave your own without labourers, barren and uncultivated;

uncultivated; that in order to ſubſiſt one part of the human ſpecies, you muſt maſſacre another; and that your own ſubjects muſt fatten with their blood the very land which they cover with deſolation.'—'And will not,' ſaid the king, 'the influence of war be the ſame upon the ſubjects of the empire?'—'By no means,' replied Beliſarius; 'and moreover the object of our arms is very different. The end aimed at by our wars is public tranquillity, that we may enjoy the fruits of peace as the purchaſe of our victories.'—'Generoſity,' ſays the Bulgarian, 'is eaſily extended when we have the ſuperior force. Let us break off the conference. You are ſtill illuſtrious in miſery, and I honour your unſhaken fidelity; it deſerves a better recompenſe. Repoſe yourſelf for this night in my own tent: you ſhall be lodged near our perſon. To-morrow it ſhall depend upon yourſelf to direct your guides which way you will be conducted.'—'To the place where they ſeized me,' ſaid Beliſarius; and then retired to the comforts of a pure and tranquil ſleep.

The next day the king of Bulgaria took leave of the good old general, and fain would have loaded him with preſents.—'They are,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'the ſpoils of my country, and you would bluſh for me, if I ſuffered myſelf to be ſo enriched.'—Some neceſſary food for himſelf and his guide was all he could be induced to accept; and the ſame party that laid violent hands upon him, eſcorted him to the place from whence he had been carried to the Barbarian camp.

CHAP. IV.

THE hero was now at the diſtance of twelve miles from the retreat of his family; but being exhauſted by a fatiguing journey, he inquired of his guide whether there was not a village in ſight, where he might reſt his wearied limbs.—'There is one,' ſaid his young conductor, 'but it is a conſiderable way off. Let theſe guards convey you to it.'—'No,' replied Beliſarius, 'I ſhould expoſe the place to the pillage of theſe rovers.' He now took leave of his convoy. Arriving

Arriving at the village, the cry that ſtruck his ear was, *There he is*; *that's he*; *it is the very man.*'—'What may this mean?'—'It is a whole family,' ſaid the guide, 'making towards you with great eagerneſs.' By this time an old man came forward from the crowd.—'Worthy gentleman,' ſaid he, 'may we crave to know who you are?'—'You plainly ſee,' replied Beliſarius, 'that I am a poor indigent wretch, and not a gentleman.—'An indigent wretch!' exclaimed the peaſant; 'that is what occaſions our curioſity; for we have a report here, that, wretched as you ſeem, you are Beliſarius.'—'Lower your voice, my honeſt friend,' replied the general; 'and if my misfortunes touch you, afford me a ſhelter under your roof.'—Theſe words were ſcarcely uttered, when he felt the villager embracing his knees; he raiſed the honeſt countryman, and went with him into an humble cot.

'Fall down, my children,' ſaid the villager to his ſon and two daughters, 'fall down at the feet of this illuſtrious hero: it was he protected us from the ravage of the Huns; but for him our little habitation had been reduced to aſhes; but for him, my children, your father would have been butchered before your eyes, your little babes would have been torn from you, and hurried into captivity; but for him, you never would have raiſed your heads again: you are indebted to him for life, and all that can be dearer than life. Venerate him the more for his preſent condition, reſpect his misfortunes, and weep over your unhappy country.'

Beliſarius, diſſolving inwardly with tenderneſs at the grateful ſentiments of this little family, and overpowered by their bleſſings on his head, could only anſwer them with the dumb eloquence of his embraces.—'Condeſcend, illuſtrious hero,' ſaid the two women, 'to receive to your arms theſe two little innocents, who have found in you a ſecond father. We ſhall never ceaſe to awaken in their memories a due ſenſe of the honour they will now receive by ſaluting their great deliverer, and being careſſed in his embraces.'—Each mother preſented her

her own child, and placed him on the general's knees. The little infants ſmiled with young aſtoniſhment, and raiſing their arms, ſeemed to offer up their thanks.—'And can you now,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'think me an object of compaſſion? Does there at this moment breathe a man more ſincerely happy than myſelf? But tell me, how has it happened that you had any knowledge of me?'—'A young nobleman,' replied the villager, 'paſſed through this place yeſterday, and inquired if we had not ſeen a blind old man go by; you anſwer the deſcription he gave us. We aſſured him we had ſeen no ſuch perſon: he then charged us to keep a good look-out, and let you know, that a friend expects you at the place where you are going. He ſaid you were in want of every thing, and requeſted us to pay you every attention in our power: he even promiſed to requite us for it. Alas! we told him that we were all variouſly employed: ſome in the labours of the field, others in domeſtic cares, and had but little leiſure to gape after travellers as they paſs by.—"Then quit your employments," ſaid the young lord, "and omit every thing rather than the act of benevolence the good old man is entitled to: he is your protector, your deliverer! it is Beliſarius whom I recommend to your diligence;" and then he opened to us the whole ſtory of your ſufferings. At the ſound of a name ſo beloved and honoured, imagine to yourſelf the agitation of our hearts. My ſon watched all night long for his general, for he had the honour of fighting under your banners, when you expelled the invaders of Thrace; and my daughters at the dawn of day were at the threſhold of the door, and there continued ſtraining their eyes with eager expectation. At length we have found you: command as you pleaſe, every thing we have is yours; the nobleman who deſires to ſee you has more in his power to give; but give what he may, he will not do it with a better heart than we offer our little all.'

While thus the father diſcourſed, the ſon, in a fixed attitude before the hero, viewed him with a penſive air, his hands claſped in each other; conſternation, pity, and reſpect,

reſpect, riſing by turns, and diffuſing themſelves over his countenance.

'My good friend,' ſays Beliſarius to the old villager, 'I thank you for theſe marks of your goodneſs. I have wherewithal to ſupport me on my way to my laſt retreat: but pray inform me, is your happineſs equal to your benevolence? Your ſon, you ſay, carried arms under my conduct. I feel myſelf intereſted about him; is he prudent, careful, and induſtrious? Does he prove a good huſband and a good father?'—'He is,' replied the old man, 'all my joy and comfort: he quitted the army upon the death of his elder brother; but he quitted it ſeamed with honourable ſcars; he relieves me from labour, the prop of my old age! He has for his wife the daughter of my friend, and heaven has ſmiled upon their union. He is of a ſanguine lively temper: ſhe is of a mild and amiable diſpoſition. My daughter, who ſtands there, is alſo happily ſettled. I gave her in marriage to a young man of good morals, and they live in mutual affection; every thing goes on to my heart's content, and they have raiſed grand-children to me, in whom I fancy I am renewing my youth. In the hopes that they will cheriſh my memory, and bleſs me when I am gone, I draw towards my grave with leſs regret.'—'Alas! my good friend,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'you excite my envy! I had two ſons, my beſt, my darling hope! I ſaw them both expire at my ſide: an only daughter is all that is left me in my age, and ſhe, alas! has too much ſenſibility for my condition and her own. But thanks be to heaven, my two boys died fighting for their country!'—At theſe words, the young man, who had been earneſtly liſtening to all that paſſed, felt his heart touched to the quick.

The ſupper, conſiſting of plain country fare, was ſerved up; but Beliſarius, by his lively repreſentations of the happineſs that dwells with obſcurity, gave it the value of the moſt ſumptuous repaſt. 'Calm and retired tranquillity,' ſays he, 'is the happieſt ſtate of man; and yet ſo little are the ſolid bleſſings of life underſtood, it is a ſtate which is never envied!'

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The young man of the houſe continued ſilent during the whole time of ſupper, with his eyes fixed on Beliſarius; he was loſt in contemplation: his inward workings grew ſtronger as he gazed: his countenance every moment ſettled into a deeper gloom, looked more intenſe with reflection, and fiercer with the various meanings that ſucceeded each other. 'Here is my ſon,' ſaid the good old landlord, 'recalling to his imagination all your battles; he peruſes you with an ardent eye.'—'He finds it difficult,' replied Beliſarius, 'to recollect his general.'—'The enemies of my general,' ſaid the young man, 'have defaced him enough to make it difficult to know him; but he is too near the hearts of his ſoldiers to be ever unknown to them.'

When Beliſarius took leave of this worthy family—'I ſhould be glad,' ſays the young man, 'if my general will permit me to attend him a little part of his way.' Being together on the road, 'I could wiſh,' ſaid he again, 'that you would order your guide to walk on before us; for I have ſomething for your private ear.—The condition, ſir, to which they have reduced you, fills me with indignation. They have left you a terrible example of ingratitude, and the baſeſt perfidy: it makes me even look with horror on my country: and as I formerly dared boldly in her ſervice, ſo I now bluſh for every drop of blood I ſpilt in her cauſe. The place of my nativity is grown deteſtable to me, and I look with pity on the children whom I have brought into this bad world.'—'Hold! hold, young man!' ſays Beliſarius; 'where is the country in which honeſt men do not fall the victims of malignity and fraud?'—'But this,' returned the young ſoldier, 'this is without a precedent. There is a peculiarity in your fate that exceeds all imagination. Who was the author of it? I have a wife and children; them I will recommend to their grandfather and the Supreme Being, and nothing ſhall retard me from ſetting out directly to tear out the villian's heart who barbarouſly'—'Alas! thou generous youth,' ſaid Beliſarius, claſping him in his arms 'this exceſs of pity kin-

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dies to enthuſiaſm. Can I conſent that a brave young man ſhall be the perpetrator of an inſidious deed? that a ſoldier ſhall become an aſſaſſin? that a virtuous ſon, a tender huſband, and an affectionate father, ſhall be the ſlave of guilt and infamy! It were to make me deſerve all that malice has inflicted on me. Reflect a little; you have relinquiſhed the juſt defence of your country to ſolace your aged father, and rear up your tender infants; and will you now for a ſuperannuated wretch like me, with an extravagant zeal, deſert that very father and your helpleſs babes? Tell me, ſhould you drench your hands in the blood of my enemies, will that recal my youthful vigour? will that reſtore my loſt organs to me? When you have made yourſelf criminal, ſhall I be the leſs miſerable?'—'No,' replied the young man, 'but the bloody cataſtrophe of a villain will ſtrike every guilty mind with horror: to make him a terrible example to the world, I will ſeize the monſter at the foot of the throne, or even of the altar, and, glutting my poniard in his heart, will thunder in his ear, "*Beliſarius ſtrikes the blow.*"—'And by what right,' ſays Beliſarius, in a deciſive tone, 'do you mean to execute my revenge? Have I transferred a right to you, which I do not poſſeſs myſelf? or do you mean to aſſume that right in defiance of every law?'—'Let law be truly adminiſtered,' ſaid the young man, 'and the ſubject will depend upon the juſtice of his country; but ſince it is perverted, ſince it gives no protection to innocence and virtue, but connives at vice, and acts in colluſion with the guilty, it is time to abjure civil ſociety, and reſort to the primitive laws of natural juſtice.'—'My worthy good friend,' replied Beliſarius, 'that is the reaſoning of ruffians, of every lawleſs banditti! To ſee the laws warped to evil purpoſes is indeed grievous to a juſt and honeſt mind; but the caſe would be ſtill more grievous, if they were to ſuffer open violation. Enfeebled laws are moſt certainly an evil, but a tranſitory evil; their total overthrow would be a laſting calamity. You would ſtrike guilt with horror, and yet you are going to encourage it by your example. My calamities, thou worthy

youth, have inſpired you with noble ſentiments; would you debaſe thoſe ſentiments by an atrocious deed? Shall the tender ſenſations of the heart be turned to horror? I conjure you, in the name of that virtue which you love, diſhonour it not by fatal raſhneſs. Let it never be ſaid that virtue has guided the hand of an aſſaſſin.'

'If their cruelty,' ſaid the young ſoldier, 'had ſpent its rage on me, I could perhaps arm myſelf with fortitude to bear the worſt; but when a man renowned, when Beliſarius—No, I will never forgive it.'—'But I forgive it,' replied Beliſarius; 'nothing but my intereſt in this buſineſs can provoke your fury; and if I renounce my own reſentments, will you go further than I am willing to do? Let me tell you, that if I were inclined to expiate my wrongs by the blood of my enemies, whole nations are ready to arm themſelves in my cauſe; but I am reſigned to my fate: imitate my example; allow me to be a judge of what is right and honourable; and, if you find within your breaſt a ſpirit to encounter death, reſerve that ſpirit for the glorious occaſion of ſerving your country and your prince.'

The ardor of the young ſoldier ſubſided at theſe words into wonder and admiration.—'Forgive me, general,' ſaid he, 'forgive the vehemence which I now bluſh to own: the outrage of your fortune drove me to exceſs; while you condemn my zeal, excuſe it alſo.'—'I do more,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'I eſteem it; it is the emotion, the tranſport of a generous mind, but let me now direct it. Your family will have need of you, live for them; and let your children imbibe from you an averſion to the enemies of Beliſarius.'—'Name them,' ſaid the young ſoldier with impatience, 'and I promiſe you my children ſhall grow up from the cradle in mortal hatred of them.'—'My enemies,' replied Beliſarius, 'are the Scythians, the Huns, the Bulgarians, the Sclavonians, the Perſians, and all the enemies of my country.'—'Thou miracle of virtue!' ſaid the young villager, proſtrating himſelf at the feet of the hero. Beliſarius embraced him, and, taking his leave, 'There are,' ſaid he, 'in this mixed ſtate inevitable

evitable evils; all that a juſt man can do is not to deſerve the portion that may be his lot. If, hereafter, the abuſe of power, the perverſion of laws, and the proſperity of bad men, ſhould move your indignation, think of Beliſarius. Farewel!'

CHAP. V.

THE philoſophic ſoul of Beliſarius was now upon the point of encountering a trial ſtill more ſevere than any he had yet met with; but it will in this place be proper to relate what happened when the hero was firſt ſeized, and hurried away to priſon.

On the night when he was loaded with fetters, and like a ſtate-criminal thrown into jail, amazement, grief, and conſternation, filled his palace. The alarm which ſeized his wife Antonina, and Eudoxa his only daughter, gave a picture of deſpair and agony in their moſt ſtriking colours. At length Antonina recovering from her fright, and calling to mind the favours which the empreſs had laviſhed on her, began to flatter herſelf that her apprehenſions were groundleſs; ſhe condemned, with ſelf-reproach, the weakneſs ſhe had betrayed. Admitted to an intimacy and dearneſs with Theodora, the companion and ſharer of all her ſocial pleaſures, ſhe depended upon ſupport from that quarter, or at leaſt ſhe believed that Theodora was her friend. In this perſuaſion ſhe attended the levee of the empreſs, and falling on her knees in the face of the whole court—'Madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'if to have defended and ſaved the empire on various occaſions has been the diſtinguiſhed lot of Beliſarius, that the guilt now imputed to him may be examined in open daylight, and that his accuſers may confront him at the tribunal of the emperor, is now the recompenſe he aſks for all his generous labours; a free trial, and the opportunity of confounding his enemies, is the only favour he can with honour accept.' Theodora made her a ſign to riſe, and with a look of frigid indifference anſwered, 'If Beliſarius is innocent, he has nothing to fear; if the charge be true, he is no ſtranger to the clemency of

his master, and he knows the soft accesses to his heart. You may withdraw, madam, in full confidence that I regard you; I shall not easily forget that I have distinguished you by my favours.' This cold reception, and the abrupt manner of the conclusion, quite overpowered Antonina; she retired pale and trembling, and of all the beholders, not one dared to lift an eye towards her.—Barsames, whom she met, would have passed by unnoticed, if she had not addressed herself to him: Barsames was the minister of the treasury, and the favourite of Theodora. She intreated him to inform her what was the crime laid to the charge of Belisarius. 'I inform you, madam!' says Barsames; 'I am totally in the dark; a stranger to this affair; I have nothing in my power; I know nothing, nor do I interfere in any thing but the duty of my department: if every body followed the same rule, the peace of the world would be less disturbed.'

'Ah!' says Antonina, 'the plot, I see, is deeply laid, and Belisarius is undone.' A little further on she met a man who owed his all to her, and who, on the preceding day, was entirely devoted to her service. She made an attempt to expostulate and canvass the affair with him; but without deigning to hear her—'I know your misfortunes,' said he, 'and I am sorely mortified; but I must beg your pardon, I have a business to solicit, and there is not a moment to be lost: I must leave you, madam; but be assured, that nobody is more zealously attached to you.' Antonina went in quest of her daughter, and in an hour's time she received directions to depart the city. The old castle already mentioned was assigned the place of her exile.

The very sight of this castle, solitary and in ruin, filled the heart of Antonina with consternation; here she considered herself as buried, and a fit of illness seized her soon after her arrival. The tender Eudoxa, distracted by the idea of a father impeached, loaded with irons, and given up a prey to his enemies; distracted further at the sight of a mother ready to break her heart with anguish; underwent the severest agonies of mind. All her days,

days, her beſt, her youthful days, were conſumed in offices of tenderneſs to her afflicted mother; each night ſhe was bathed in tears, and in that ſuſpenſe of pain, when weary nature ſinks down to reſt, her ſlumbers were ever troubled with the moſt horrid dreams. The image of her father plunged into a dungeon's gloom, and bending under the weight of galling chains, was ever preſent to her; and her apprehenſions for her mother increaſed the terrors of the viſionary ſcene.

Antonina had been converſant in courts, and the thorough knowledge ſhe had of them, for ever painted to her fancy the rage of perſecution let looſe againſt her huſband. 'What a triumph,' ſaid ſhe, 'for thoſe malignant ſpirits, who for a ſeries of years have thought themſelves depreſſed by the virtues of a great and virtuous man! how will they now exult in his downfal! I ſee before me the ghaſtly ſmile of malice, the myſterious air of calumny, that affects to conceal what it knows, and would appear tender to the man whom it is ready to ſtab. Deteſted flatterers! ye fawning ſycophants! I ſee ye all, and hear your cruel inſults on our misfortunes. Oh, my daughter! in your diſtreſs you may at leaſt enjoy the conſolation that you have nothing to reproach yourſelf; as to me, I have more reaſon to bluſh for my former felicities than my preſent calamities. The ſage advice, and all the prudent leſſons, your father uſed to give me were little heeded by me; they were too importunate: in vain he counſelled me to ſhun the baits of pleaſure and of courts, to think that my trueſt dignity conſiſted in ſimplicity of manners, that the ſincereſt happineſs was to be found in domeſtic enjoyment, and that it would be the triumph of my ſex to bid adieu to vanities that would vaniſh like a dream, or end in ſhame.—His remonſtrances appeared to me to be the overflowings of ſpleen, and I complained of his ſullen humour to his very enemies. What giddy inattention was mine! and now what a ſad reverſe! The burſting of the ſtorm awakened me to reflection, and I never ſaw the abyſs till I was tumbling into it. If you knew, my child, the cold

averted air with which the empreſs diſmiſſed me! even ſhe to whom my ſoul was enſlaved! whoſe every whim was the rule of my actions, the inclination of my heart! Oh! that court, which on the eve of our misfortunes ſmiled with a general complacence on me! the falſe, inſidious train! not one of them, when they ſaw me leaving it like an outcaſt, with eyes dejected and ſwoln with tears, not one of them would acknowledge me! In courts, my child, misfortune has the qualities of a plague, and makes you ſhunned by all.'

Such were the reflections of this unfortunate woman, whoſe eyes were now opened to the fallacies of courts, though the affections of her heart were not yet alienated from them. She deſpiſed her former vanities, and yet loved them ſtill.

An entire year paſſed away without any tidings of Beliſarius; a conſpiracy had been detected, the hero was charged with being the author of it, and the voice of his enemies, which was called the public voice, pronounced him guilty of the treaſon. The principal conſpirators had ſuffered death in determined ſilence, without the ſmalleſt intimation of their leader; upon this was founded preſumptive proof againſt Beliſarius, and, for want of poſitive evidence, he was left to languiſh in a dungeon, in hopes that his death would ſuperſede the neceſſity of clear conviction. In the mean time, the old diſbanded ſoldiery, who now were mingled with the people, clamoured for the enlargement of their general, and were ready to vouch for his innocence: a popular inſurrection followed, univerſally menacing to force the priſon doors, unleſs he was immediately ſet at liberty. This tumult enraged the emperor. Theodora perceiving it, managed artfully to ſeize the moment of ill-humour and paſſion, knowing that then only he was capable of injuſtice.—'Well,' ſaid ſhe, 'let him be given up to the populace after he is rendered unable to command them.' The horrible advice prevailed: it was the deciſive judgment againſt Beliſarius.

When the people ſaw him come forth without an eye

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in his head, a general burſt of rage and lamentation filled the city. Beliſarius appeaſed the tumult. 'My friends and countrymen,' ſaid he, 'your emperor has been impoſed upon; every man is liable to error; it is our buſineſs to regret Juſtinian's error, and to ſerve him ſtill; my innocence is now the only good they have left me; let me poſſeſs it ſtill. The revolt which you threaten cannot reſtore what I have loſt, but it may deprive me of the only conſolation that remains in my breaſt.' The ſwelling ſpirits of the populace ſubſided at theſe words into a perfect calm; they offered him all they were worth. Beliſarius thanked them—'All I will aſk,' ſays he, 'is one of your boys to guide my ſteps to the aſylum where my family expects me.

The adventure with the Bulgarians carried Beliſarius out of his way, while Tiberius preſſed forward to the retreat of his exiled family. The rattling of a carriage in the court-yard of the caſtle gave a ſudden emotion of hope and joy to Antonina and her daughter Eudoxa: the latter ran forth in the ſtrongeſt agitations of mind; but, alas! inſtead of her father, diſappointed to ſee a youthful ſtranger, ſhe returned diſconſolate to her mother, and with a ſigh pronounced—'It is not he!'

Anſelmo, a faithful old ſervant in the family, appearing in the court yard—'Pray, honeſt friend,' ſaid Tiberius, 'is not this the retreat of Beliſarius?'—'His wife and daughter expect him here,' ſaid the faithful Anſelmo, 'but their hopes have hitherto proved abortive; would to heaven I could ſuffer for him, ſo he were at liberty!'—'He is at liberty,' replied Tiberius; 'he is on his journey hither; you will ſee him ſoon; he ought to have been arrived before now.'—'Oh! walk in, walk in, and communicate the news to his family; I will ſhew you the way.'—'Madam,' exclaimed Anſelmo, running eagerly towards Antonina, 'I have news for you, madam; rejoice and be of good heart, my maſter lives; he is free, they have reſtored him to you; a generous young man brings the happy tidings: he thought to have found him here.' At theſe words, Antonina

ſummoned

ſummoned up all her ſpirits—'Where is the generous ſtranger, the virtuous youth who intereſts himſelf in our afflictions? Shew him in; let me ſee him.' Antonina uttered theſe words with a quick vehemence of joy.—'Our miſeries are ended now,' exclaimed Eudoxa, throwing herſelf upon her mother's bed, and folding her in her arms; 'my father lives, he is at liberty, and we ſhall ſee him once more: let us, my deareſt mother, forget our woes; heaven has not deſerted us; we ſhall all meet again.'

'And do you then recal me back to life,' ſaid Antonina to Tiberius? 'has my huſband triumphed over his enemies at laſt?' Tiberius, inwardly afflicted that he had only a mockery of joy to offer them, calmly ananſwered, 'That Beliſarius was indeed alive; that he had ſeen him, had converſed with him, and that, imagining he had before now reached his home, he came to tender him the little offices of friendſhip and good neighbourhood.'

Eudoxa, whoſe eyes were rivetted to Tiberius, plainly ſaw the ſymptoms of infelt grief through the ſtruggles of the youth to ſuppreſs them. 'You bring with you,' ſaid ſhe, 'the words of joy and comfort to the afflicted, and yet, amidſt the gladſome tidings, I mark an air of dejection that ſpeaks ſome concealed affliction! Does our miſery depreſs you then? Give me back my father; let him return, and bring health with him to my unhappy mother, then you ſhall ſee whether riches are neceſſary to make us happy.'

In tender and pathetic ſcenes like theſe, the force of nature is ſo inſinuating, that Eudoxa had no need of other charms than the ſentiments ſhe uttered to melt and engage the heart of Tiberius. To the grace of her perſon he was inattentive; he only ſaw an affectionate and virtuous daughter, whom a becoming firmneſs of mind, pious reſignation, and duty to a father, rendered ſuperior to calamity. 'Imagine not,' ſaid he, 'that the ſentiments of humanity which I have ventured to expreſs, have any tincture of pride or inſulting pity.—

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Whatever be the condition to which Beliſarius and his family are reduced, their misfortunes will ever be illuſtrious, and the object of envy ſtill.'—'Why do you talk of misfortune?' replied the mother; 'if they have reſtored my huſband to his liberty, they are convinced of his innocence; he muſt therefore be eſtabliſhed in his former poſſeſſions.'

'Madam,' ſaid Tiberius, 'it would be to keep you in cruel ſuſpenſe, merely to wound you deeper at laſt, if I were to cheriſh any ſoothing hopes in reſpect to his condition. To his popularity alone he is indebted to his freedom; the court has yielded to the dread of an inſurrection: but in complying with the demands of the people, they have ſent him forth as wretched as they could make him.'

'No matter,' ſays Eudoxa, with her amiable ſenſibility of heart; 'if they do but leave us a little land to cultivate, we ſhall not be leſs happy than the honeſt country-folks whom I ſee abroad in the fields.'—'Gracious heaven!' exclaimed Tiberius, 'the daughter of Beliſarius humbled to this low ſituation!'—'This low ſituation!' replied Eudoxa; 'it was not unworthy of the heroes of Rome, when Rome was free and virtuous. Beliſarius will not bluſh to be another Regulus; my mother and I have learned in exile domeſtic cares and the arts of œconomy: my honoured father ſhall wear a coat ſpun by his own daughter's hand.'

Tears guſhed down the cheek of Tiberius, as he marked the pure heartfelt joy that warmed and animated the whole frame of the lovely Eudoxa. 'Alas!' ſaid he within himſelf, 'what a piteous ſtroke will preſently awaken her from this illuſion!' With eyes bent downward to the ground, he ſtood before her, immovable, in ſorrow and ſilence.

CHAP. VI.

BELISARIUS was now entering the court-yard of the caſtle. Honeſt Anſelmo ſaw him; advancing nearer, he recollected his maſter, and, tranſported with joy,

joy, preſſed eagerly forward to ſhew him in: but ſoon perceiving that he was blind—'Oh heaven,' ſaid Anſelmo, 'Oh, my maſter! have I lived to this?' Theſe words, broken and intermixed with frequent ſobbings, gave Beliſarius to underſtand that it was his old faithful ſervant Anſelmo. The poor fellow proſtrated himſelf at the hero's feet, and embraced his knees. Beliſarius raiſed him from the ground, and, having aſſuaged his grief by exhortations, bid him lead the way to his wife and daughter.

At the ſight Eudoxa gave a great ſcream and ſwooned away. Antonina, who was ill of a ſlow conſuming fever, was ſeized with the moſt frantic violence: with all the force of ſudden fury ſhe ſtarted from her bed, and, breaking from the hold of Tiberius and the woman that nurſed her, made an effort to daſh herſelf againſt the floor. Eudoxa returning to her ſenſes, and animated by the ſhrieks of her mother, flew to her aſſiſtance, and catching her in her arms, implored her to forbear out of compaſſion to her daughter. 'Oh, let me, let me die,' replied the diſtracted mother; 'if I muſt live, I will live to revenge his wrongs, and to tear piece-meal the hearts of his barbarous enemies. The monſters of iniquity! is that his recompenſe? But for him they would all long ago have been buried in the ruins of their palaces: he has prolonged their tyranny, that is his crime! for that he ſuffers; for that he has made atonement to the people. Barbarity unheard of! deteſted treachery! the pillar of the ſtate! their deliverer! Execrable court! a ſet of blood-hounds met in council! Juſt heaven, are theſe your ways? Behold, innocence is oppreſſed, and you look tamely on! Behold, the factors of deſtruction triumph in their guilt!'

Amidſt this agony of grief, ſhe ſcattered her hair about the room in fragments, and with her own hands defaced her features: now with open arms ſhe ruſhed, upon her lord, and claſping him to her heart, poured forth her tears, as if ſhe would drown him with her ſorrows; then, abruptly turning to her daughter—'Die, thou wretch!'

BELISARIUS. Ch. VI. p. 34.
Eudoxa fainting at the sight
of Belisarius, her Father.

T. Kirk, pinxit. C. Cooke, C. Warren, sculp. Apr. 18. 1798.

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wretch!' ſhe ſaid, 'eſcape from a bad world! here is nought but miſery for virtue, and triumph for vice and infamy.'

To this violence a mortal languor ſucceeded. The ſtorm of paſſion gave a fit of momentary ſtrength, the more effectual to deſtroy. In a few hours after ſhe breathed her laſt.

And now, Tiberius, what a ſcene had you before your eyes? A blind old man, his wife lying dead, a daughter in the laſt extremity of anguiſh; tears, ſhrieks, and lamentations all around! This was the ſituation, the ſad cataſtrophe in which fortune exhibited a family, which for thirty years had flouriſhed in every ſplendour and dignity of life. The words of a renowned philoſopher here occurred to Tiberius: 'Behold,' ſays he, 'a ſpectacle which heaven ſurveys with pleaſure; a great man wreſtling with adverſity, and by his courage invincible to the laſt!'

Beliſarius did not endeavour to control either his own grief or that of his daughter; he permitted a free vent to both; but as ſoon as he had paid to nature the tribute of a feeling heart, he reaſſumed his ſtrength, and emerged from his afflictions with true fortitude of mind.

Though the anguiſh of Eudoxa was not abated, yet, leſt ſhe ſhould renew her father's troubles, ſhe endeavoured to ſuppreſs her ſorrows; but ſtill the old general, as he embraced her, found himſelf moiſtened with her tears. 'You afflict yourſelf, my child, you afflict yourſelf on account of accidents which, inſtead of depreſſing us, ought to invigorate our ſouls, and raiſe us above misfortune and diſgrace. Your mother, after having atoned for the errors of her former life, is ſafe in eternal peace. She now looks down with pity upon us, and commiſerates the lot that detains us in this bad world. That cold, inanimated corpſe, which lies there devoid of motion, is an emblem of the tranquillity her ſoul enjoys. Thus then you behold how vain and tranſitory are all the calamities of life; a breath of wind comes, and all is vaniſhed. The empire and the ſplendour of

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its court have faded away from the eyes of your mother; and now, in the bosom of her God, she beholds this world as a little speck in the immensity of space. These are reflections founded on wisdom; these are reflections that administer to the virtuous mind all its consolation, its best support in the hour of adversity.'—'Oh! give me that support, assist my feeble sex encompassed thus with wretchedness and misery. I could have borne up against any misfortune that could befal me; but to behold a mother broken-hearted, a tender parent, whom my heart adored, expiring within my arms! and thus to see you too, thou best of fathers, in this deplorable condition, to which your enemies have reduced you!'—'Alas! my daughter,' replied Belisarius, 'in despoiling me of my eyes, they did no more than the infirmities of age or death would shortly have done; and as to what respects my fortune, you little knew the use of affluence, if you do not know how to disregard it.'—'Oh! witness for me, heaven,' said Eudoxa, 'it is not the loss of fortune that can give me a moment's pain.'—'Then let nothing distress your spirit,' replied the venerable father; and with his hand he wiped the falling tear from her cheek.

Belisarius being informed that a young stranger desired to speak with him, gave him admittance, and asked the intention of his visit. 'It is not now a time,' answered Tiberius, 'to offer consolation to you: thou illustrious unfortunate, I respect your sorrows; I take a share in your afflictions, and it is my earnest prayer to heaven that I may hereafter be enabled to assuage them; till then, all I can do is to mix my tears with yours.'

It was now time to perform the funeral obsequies: Belisarius, supported and guided by his daughter, attended the remains of his wife to their last depository. His grief upon the occasion was that of a philosopher; it was deep but silent; inwardly felt, but outwardly composed: his face was clouded with melancholy, but a grave and sentimental melancholy. With a mien erect, and a steady countenance, he did not so much seem to brave

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his fortune, as to resign himself to its stroke with a dignity of sorrow.

Tiberius assisted at the mournful ceremony; he beheld the fond regret of Eudoxa, and he returned deeply affected by the last duties which she payed to the memory of her mother.

Belisarius addressed himself to him in these words:—'I perceive, generous youth, that it is to your humanity I am indebted for recommendations on my road hither; instruct me who you are, and to what motive I am to attribute your good offices.'—'My name is Tiberius,' replied the youth; 'I carried arms under Narsus in Italy, and I have since served in the wars of Colchis.—I was one of the hunting party to whom you applied for shelter, and whose indiscretion you so properly checked; I have ever since severely censured myself for not making my apology, and requesting a further favour of you. I am placed in a state of affluence: that may be a misfortune; but if you will concur with me, good may be deduced from evil. Near this place I have a country-seat, and it is the height of my ambition to consecrate it to the use of an exiled hero. It will be presuming upon a slender title, to tell you of the respect and veneration I entertain for your character: he who loves his country, must, by a natural consequence, feel the disgrace of Belisarius, and wish to soften his calamities; but perhaps I can urge a claim that will touch you nearer, and in some degree solicit for me. You will not wholly despise the ambition of a young man who pants to be admitted to the intimacy of an illustrious hero, that in his converse he may drink, as it were, at the fountain-head of wisdom, of honour, and of virtue.'

'You pay a compliment to my old age,' replied Belisarius; 'but, however, the interest you seem to take in my misfortunes bespeaks a well-turned spirit and an elegance of mind. At present you must excuse me; retirement and self converse are what I must now have recourse to: the agitation of my spirits must be composed by silent meditation. Hereafter I shall so far accept your

propoſal, as to wiſh to live in good neighbourhood with you, and to maintain a friendly intercourſe. I have a regard for youth; in that happy ſeaſon of life, the ſoul, as yet unhackneyed in the ways of men, is ſuſceptible of every fine impreſſion; the ſublime and the beautiful of virtue inflame it with a laudable enthuſiaſm; and worldly paſſions have not yet entangled it in their ſnares. Your viſits will ever be acceptable; call upon me often; I ſhall be glad to converſe with you.'

'If I am worthy of that honourable commerce,' replied Tiberius,' 'why may I not poſſeſs you wholly? My anceſtors will applaud the uſe I make of the patrimony they tranſmitted to me, when it is rendered ſacred by the retreat of Beliſarius. Honour, reſpect, and reverence, will then be yours, and my whole houſehold train will learn to emulate my example in treating you with every rank of veneration.'

'I read, young man, the characters of virtue in all your words,' returned Beliſarius; 'but let us do nothing raſhly. Give me to underſtand, for it is now ten years ſince I have been ſequeſtered from the world, what is your father's ſtation? and what are his deſigns in regard to your future ſettlement in life?'—'We are deſcended,' replied Tiberius, 'from one of thoſe families which Conſtantine tranſplanted from Rome, and honoured with his higheſt favours. He was eſteemed and cheriſhed by his ſovereign. In the reign of the emperor Juſtin, my father acquired no ſmall ſhare of military glory. In the ſucceeding reign undue preferences were given to others; at leaſt he thought ſo, and retired in diſcontent. Of that diſcontent he has ſince repented, and now for his ſon he forms ſchemes of ambition, which he neglected for himſelf.'—'You have opened enough to me,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'and I will not be an obſtacle to your advancement. You have convinced me that the diſpoſitions of your heart are good: the pleaſure ariſing from a generous way of thinking ſeems at once to be your motive and your recompenſe; and indeed that pleaſure is the ſweeteſt the mind can feel. But I foreſee a danger

danger of which you are not aware: by visiting me, you will involve yourself in the ruin of a man proscribed.—For let me tell you, my worthy young friend, that a court, whether right or wrong in its measures, never properly reviews its own deeds; it never reforms its conduct. Does it punish a real criminal: he will soon be forgotten. But has it injured the man of blameless integrity: he will be persecuted with unrelenting hatred; for the very mention of his name is a satire on the times, and his existence is to the conscience of his enemies an unceasing remembrance of guilt.'

'I take upon me all the risk,' says Tiberius, 'I will be responsible for my conduct. The emperor may have erred, but he is ever open to conviction.'

'If you mean that he will be open to conviction in regard to me,' says Belisarius, 'you must not lose a thought that way. The measure of my woes is full; the mischief is done; and may the emperor, for the space of his future days, forget it all.'

'Since you have gone so far,' replied Tiberius, 'let me insist upon a further act of generosity, to crown the whole. Preserve Justinian from the eternal reproach of letting you languish away the remainder of your days in misery. The humiliating condition in which I find you, is shocking to humanity, a dishonour to the crown, the horror of every honest mind, and the utter discouragement of all virtue like your own.'

'The virtue,' replied Belisarius, 'that will be discouraged by misfortunes, is not like my own. But to deal frankly, I think it possible, as you seem to do, that my wretched condition may awaken the mingled passions of pity and indignation. A poor blind old man can give no umbrage, and may excite compassion. For that reason, I am determined to live in obscurity. If I made myself known to your friends, it was in an unguarded moment, when I was provoked by the intemperance of the company beyond the bounds of patience. It shall be the last indiscretion of my life, and this asylum shall be my grave. Farewel! The emperor may

perhaps be ignorant that the Bulgarians have entered Thrace; be ſure to inform him of it.'

Tiberius withdrew, not a little diſconcerted at the event of his negociation. The ſum of all that paſſed he reported to Juſtinian. A body of troops was immediately put in motion; and in a few days the public tranquillity was confirmed by the expulſion of the Bulgarians. 'Now then,' ſaid the emperor to Tiberius, 'we are at leiſure to viſit the unfortunate general. I will paſs myſelf for your father, and be upon your guard that nothing fall from you to undeceive him.' Juſtinian had a lodge about half way to the aſylum of Beliſarius.—Thither he betook himſelf, detached from his train of courtiers, and the next day proceeded on his viſit to the unfortunate hero.

CHAP. VII.

'AND is this the hero's reſidence? Is this the habitation of him who ſo often brought me victory and triumph!' Theſe were the words of Juſtinian, as he paſſed under an old portico mouldering into ruin. As ſoon as they entered, Beliſarius roſe to receive them. At the ſight of the venerable man, the emperor felt a pang of remorſe and ſhame for the condition to which he had reduced him. An exclamation of grief broke from him, and leaning on Tiberius, he covered his eyes with his hands, as if unworthy to behold the light which the hero ſaw no more.—'What mean thoſe tones of grief?' ſays Beliſarius. 'I have brought my father to ſee you,' replied Tiberius, 'and he is ſenſibly touched by your misfortunes.'—'Where is he,' ſaid the general, ſtretching forth his hands. 'Let him come to my embrace; for he has a virtuous ſon.'—Juſtinian was obliged to comply with the requeſt, and as ſoon as he felt the old man preſſing to his boſom, his emotions were ſo ſtrong and tender, that he was unable to ſuppreſs his tears and groans. 'Reſtrain this violence of pity,' ſaid Beliſarius; 'perhaps I am not ſo wretched as you imagine. Let us diſcourſe a little about what concerns yourſelf and this young

young man, who will be a comfort to you in your old age.'—'Yes,' replied the emperor, in ſhort and interrupted accents, 'yes—if you will condeſcend—to let him attend your lectures upon human life.'—'Alas! what can I offer,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'that a wiſe and good father has not already anticipated?'—'You may inſtruct him,' ſaid the emperor, 'in what I perhaps know little of, the ways of courts, where he muſt paſs his days. For a long time I have had ſo little commerce with men, that the world is as new to me as it is to him. But you, who have ſeen things in all their various aſpects, may render him ineſtimable ſervice; and therefore I intreat you to unboſom yourſelf to him.'—'If he wants to give ſtability to fortune,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'I am unfit to read a leſſon on that head, as you perceive. Would he learn to be an honeſt man at the hazard of all that is dear to him? There I can be of ſome uſe. He is born with bright advantages, and that is a primary requiſite.'—'Very true,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'he is deſcended from a race of noble anceſtors.' 'That was not my meaning; but, however, that is an advantage, if not perverted to a wrong uſe. Have you ever, young man,' continued Beliſarius, 'reflected upon the true idea of nobility? It is a letter of credit given you by your country upon the ſecurity of your anceſtors, in the confidence that, at a proper period of life, you will acquit yourſelf with honour to thoſe who ſtand engaged for you.'—'But that credit,' ſays the emperor, 'is often raſhly given.'—'No matter,' reſumed Beliſarius; 'it is notwithſtanding an inſtitution of uſeful policy. I imagine to myſelf, when a child of noble deſcent comes into the world, naked, weak, indigent, and helpleſs, like the offspring of a common peaſant, I then imagine to myſelf his country greeting him in this manner: "Welcome, my child! welcome to my arms! You will hereafter be devoted to my ſervice, intrepid, gallant, generous, and heroic as your famed forefathers. They have tranſmitted to you their own brilliant example; I confer upon you their titles and their honours, ſtrong reaſons both to rouſe you

to an emulation of their virtues." 'This is the ſolemn ſcene I figure to myſelf: can you ſuggeſt any thing to your fancy more awful and ſublime?'—'But this is rather carrying it too far,' ſaid Juſtinian.—'Not a jot,' replied Beliſarius; 'in the education of young minds, we muſt propoſe nobly to them. Let me add, there is frugality in dealing out pomp and honours with a liberal hand. For ſuppoſe, upon a fair eſtimate, that theſe incentives produce only two or three great men in a century: and what then? The ſtate has nothing to complain of; nay, it has ample compenſation. You, young man, muſt be one of thoſe who are to make this compenſation to your country.' Here addreſſing himſelf to the emperor, 'You have allowed me,' ſays he, 'to ſpeak in the ſtile of a father to him.'—'Do it, I conjure you,' replied Juſtinian.—'Well then, my ſon, you muſt begin with a perſuaſion that nobility is a flame which blazes intenſely as long it can communicate itſelf, but dies away as ſoon as it wants the proper materials to keep it alive and to ſupport it. Be mindful, therefore, young man, of your birth, for it impoſes duties on you; be mindful of your anceſtors, for the example they have left you calls for your utmoſt ardour: remember, that the glory from them devolved upon you, is not an inheritance upon which you are lazily to ſubſiſt; and, above all things, eradicate from your heart that ſupercilious pride which looks big with the conſciouſneſs of a family name, and beholds with the timorous eye of ſcorn and jealouſy every preference obtained by honeſt merit. Ambition has in its nature a ſpurious ſort of novelty, and therefore, by a kind of congenial influence, readily inſinuates itſelf into the minds of perſons well deſcended; but this paſſion, when carried to exceſs, is tinged with meanneſs, like any other motive of the heart. It ſwells with its own importance, becauſe it affects an air ſuperior to all the duties of an honeſt man. Would you mark its operations, and know its character diſtinctly? Obſerve the bird of prey, how it hovers over the field in a morning, and amidſt a thouſand animals marks out

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its deſtined prey; even in the ſame manner ambition weakens to its early ſchemes, and plans the future deſtruction of ſome ſplendid virtue. Alas! my friend, an attachment to ſelf, which is indeed a natural propenſity of the heart, becomes enormous in a public character, whenever it fixes into a ruling paſſion. I have known men in my time, who would not heſitate to riſk the ſafety of a whole army, or the well-being of the ſtate, in order to gratify the ſelfiſh views of inordinate ambition. Stung with envy at the ſucceſs of others, whom they have not merit to emulate, they are for ever alarmed with the apprehenſion of loſing the honour of ſome brilliant action; and were they not reſtrained by fear, they would make every enterprize miſcarry in which they have not the command; even the public good is a calamity to them, unleſs aſcribed to their own abilities. This ſet of men, whether in the cabinet or the field, is the moſt pernicious race. The man of true honour feels within himſelf the beſt intimations of his duty, and he looks for no external motive. His God and his conſcience are the witneſſes of his actions, and to them only he makes his appeal. A generous openneſs of heart, a calm deliberate courage, and a prompt zeal for the public ſervice, are at once conſtituents of true greatneſs, and the beſt evidences of it. Pride, vanity, and envy, are the marks of a little and a narrow ſpirit. It is not enough that you make no pretenſion to the praiſe which you have not merited; you muſt even poſſeſs the noble ſelf-denial that can renounce the fame you have fairly earned. It muſt ever be remembered, that the ſovereign is liable to err, for he is no more than man: and the mind ought to be fore-armed with the conſideration, that your country, and the age you live in, may form wrong judgments of you; nay, that thoſe judgments may not be reverſed by the equity of after times. In that caſe, you muſt conſult your own heart, and in the manly ſelf-conference inquire, "Were I reduced to the low condition of Beliſarius, would my innocence ſupport me? Would the conſciouſneſs of having diſcharged my duty

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make even affliction ſmile?" If you feel within yourſelf any indeciſion reſpecting this matter, live your days in obſcurity: you have not the materials of a public character.'

'Alas!' ſaid Juſtinian, with a deep ſigh, 'what you expect is above the powers of man; and you are yourſelf a terrible example.'—'My example may at firſt appear terrible,' replied Beliſarius; 'but upon a cloſer view, that impreſſion will wear away. Let us ſuppoſe, for inſtance, that the chance of war, a fit of illneſs, or a decay of nature, had deprived me of my ſight; it would then have been among the common accidents of life, with nothing remarkable or pathetic annexed to it. Are not the vices of human nature among the incidents of life? Are they not, in the ordinary courſe of things, as much as the plague that laid waſte the empire? Does it ſignify by what inſtrument we fall? The wrath of a ſovereign, the arrow of an enemy, or a grain of ſand, they can all diſpatch us, and no matter which. When we enter upon the ſtage of life, we muſt be prepared for the changes of the ſcene. You, ſir, who have ſent forth your ſon to a courſe of military toil in the ſervice of his country; have you no preſentiment, no forecaſt to ſuggeſt to you the variety of perils he has to cope with? Add to that account the machinations of envy, the ſnares of treachery, the malice of diſſimulation, and clandeſtine ſtabs of calumny; and if your ſon lives to my age without being ruined by them, you will allow that he had peculiar good fortune. Every thing in this life has its counterbalance. You ſee me now ſuperannuated, blind, and indigent; the tenant of an old caſtle in ruins: but look back to a ſpace of thirty years, adorned with happineſs, and bright with victory and triumphs; review that period, and you will wiſh your ſon the lot of Beliſarius. Come, my worthy neighbour, we muſt ſummon up a little reſolution; you feel the ſolicitude of a father; but your ſon, I ſtill flatter myſelf, does me the honour to envy me, even now.'—'Moſt aſſuredly I do,' exclaimed Tiberius.—'But he feels a virtuous envy,'

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ſaid the emperor, interrupting him; 'and the object of it is not the ſeries of your victories, but that unſhaken courage which ſtands at bay with fortune to the laſt.'—'Courage is indiſpenſible,' replied Beliſarius; 'but not merely that courage which can look death in the face: that is the bravery of the common ſoldier. The courage of a general is an elevation of mind ſuperior to all human contingencies. Who, think you, in my eſtimation, is the man of true courage? He who, at the utmoſt hazard, nay, at the expence of his glory, continues obſtinate in the diſcharge of his duty. Such was Fabius, that Roman, worthy, wiſe, temperate and firm; who could hear the cenſures of mankind for his delay, yet hold the even tenor of his conduct free from the irreſolution of the vain inconſiſtent Pompey, who choſe to hazard the fate of Rome and the univerſe, rather than groan under the intolerable pleaſantry of a joke. I will juſt mention a paſſage in my own life. In one of my firſt campaigns againſt the Perſians, the raſh advice of certain turbulent ſpirits in my camp prevailed upon me to give battle, much againſt my own inclination. I loſt the day. For that miſconduct I ſhall ever ſtand ſelf-condemned. Who lets the caprice of opinion be the rule of his actions, will waver in uncertainty, without preciſion or dependence on himſelf. Let me aſk, what would be the conſequence if, before we decide with ourſelves to be juſt and upright, we ſhould reſolve to wait for a diſpaſſionate age of the world, and an infallible prince? We muſt end therefore in this concluſion: keep right onward with firmneſs and intrepidity. Perhaps, when you reach the goal, ingratitude and calumny will be there united; but glory will alſo be there; and if not, virtue may diſpenſe with it: ſhe will never fail you. Even in the vileſt ſtate of miſery and oppreſſion, ſhe will be a faithful follower; and, oh! my good friend, if you but knew how much a ſingle ſmile of virtue outweighs all the fickle careſſes of fortune——'

'Your every word penetrates my ſoul,' ſaid Juſtinian, in a tender tone of voice, and much embarraſſed. 'How

ineſtimably

ineſtimably happy is my ſon to imbibe theſe ſentiments at this period of life! It is in this ſchool that ſovereigns ought to ſtudy!'—'Let us ſay nothing of ſovereigns,' replied Beliſarius; 'they are more to be pitied than we are.'—'Yes,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'ſituated as they are, with not a friend, at leaſt without any of ability and courage enough to guide their ſteps, their caſe is lamentable indeed. My ſon is deſtined by his birth to live in courts: it may, one day, be his lot, in the councils of his prince, or perhaps in a more intimate connexion, to avail himſelf of theſe your lectures for the benefit of mankind. Do not diſdain to open and enlarge his underſtanding; proceed to fill his young conceptions with ſublime ideas of the true art of governing; inſtruct him, as you think the friend of a ſovereign ought to be. Juſtinian is now near his grave; but his more happy ſucceſſor may have the pupil of Beliſarius for his friend.'—'Alas!' ſaid the hero, 'would it were in my power once more, before I die, to be of ſervice to my country! But the obſervations my experience has made will be thought the reveries of a viſionary old man. And indeed in theory ſyſtems are eaſily ſettled; difficulties riſe and diſappear.—The projector is maſter of his combinations, and he arranges them at his eaſe. He adapts every thing with facility to all emergencies and the wiſhes of mankind: he fancies himſelf free from the influence of paſſion, an unerring philoſopher, exempt from frailties, always enlightened, moderate, and wiſe. A ſweet illuſion this, and not likely to laſt long, but that the theoriſt ſoon extricates himſelf out of embarraſſments, and has the reins of government in his own hands.'—'But this illuſion has its uſe,' ſaid the young man; 'for even the chimerical idea of the beſt poſſible ſyſtem may be the model of a good, though imperfect, inſtitution.'—'I wiſh it may,' replied Beliſarius; 'but I am not ſanguine enough to hope it. The very worſt arrangements of civil policy, and the moſt defective forms of government, have their admirers and their zealots.'—'I will venture to promiſe on my part,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'that your ſpeculations

gulations will not be thrown away, if you will deign to communicate them to my ſon.'—'With all my heart,' replied the hero; 'you deſerve that I ſhould be open and ingenuous with you. One condition I have to exact, and that is entire ſecreſy, during the preſent reign, in regard to our confidential talk.'—'And why that caution?' ſaid Juſtinian. 'Becauſe I am not willing,' replied Beliſarius, 'to grieve an aged emperor's breaſt, and cloud the ſunſet of his days with a proſpect of evils which he has not power to diſpel.'—Such was the firſt interview between them.

On his way back, 'what an indelible diſgrace,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'not to have known and diſtinguiſhed ſuch a man! It is thus, my beſt Tiberius, it is in this manner we are deceived, and rendered tyrants againſt the inclination of our hearts.'

The emperor was haunted all night by the image of Beliſarius. The next day he ſaw him before his eyes in every apartment of the palace. In the evening, about the ſame hour, he ſet out to enjoy the melancholy pleaſure of a ſecond meeting.

CHAP. VIII.

BELISARIUS was walking a little way on the road with his guide. At ſight of him, Juſtinian alighted from his carriage, and familiarly began—'You find us deep in meditation, repreſenting to ourſelves the injuſtice of the ſentence which wicked men extorted from an aged emperor. My ſon and I were engaged in a ſerious train of reflections upon the wretched ſtate of ſovereigns, and the dangers that ſurround them. I could not help thinking it a wonderful event in the hiſtory of human affairs, that a whole people, conſiſting of free-born men and equal all by nature, ſhould with one joint-aſſent reſign their rights into the hands of a ſingle perſon, a weak individual, a feeble mortal like themſelves, ſubject to the ſame infirmities, open to impoſition, liable to ſelf-deluſion, and prone to errors, which in a moment may prove deſtructive to millions!'—'And do you imagine,' ſays Beliſarius, 'that in a ſenate, or an aſſembly of the people, there is

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more safety, greater wisdom, or a steadier administration of justice? Was it under a monarchy that Camillus, Themistocles, and Aristides, were proscribed? To multiply the members of government, is to multiply its vices, for every individual mingles his own. The most simple form of government is the most eligible: and whether states were founded upon conquest or original compact, whether mankind agreed to transfer their natural rights to the civil magistrate, or were by superior force subdued into political society; in either case it was reasonable, that the most renowned for wisdom or for valour should attract the popular regard, and gain the general suffrage in his favour. I am not therefore surprised that the magistrate or the hero should be selected for the government of the whole; but that a single person could be found willing to accept so painful a pre-eminence, is matter of astonishment.'—'This part of the argument,' said Tiberius, 'is not sufficiently clear to my apprehension.'—'To form a distinct idea,' replied Belisarius, 'it will help you much, if you will figure to your fancy the first formation of a state, and place yourself alternately in the different characters of the people and the sovereign.'

'Where is the risk, the people may be supposed to say, what hazard do we run in giving supremacy to a king? With the good of the whole we blend his happiness; we make them but one thing; the force of the community becomes the strength of the crown; upon the general weal his glory is grafted; and the regal character is at once derived from the people, and supported by them. The general love of his subjects will be his true self-love, and his best interest will be found in justice, moderation, and beneficence. This must have been the political creed of mankind.'—'But they did not take into their account,' said Justinian, 'the passions and the complication of motives that encompass a prince.'—'Very true,' replied Belisarius; 'they only thought of an inseparable union of interests, between the sovereign and his people; that there ever could be a separation of those interests, and that the two parts of the body-politic should live in a state of mutual

mutual hoſtility, did not enter into their idea. Uſurpation appeared to them a kind of ſuicide, that could only proceed from a total privation of reaſon: and ſhould the prince be ſeized with ſo extravagant a frenzy, they relied upon the wiſdom of the legiſlature to control the paſſions of a man grown an enemy to himſelf. They foreſaw indeed that many might find their intereſt in miſchief and evil deeds; but they perſuaded themſelves, that ſuch a confederacy in vice would be a ſmall minority, againſt which a great ſuperiority of good and honeſt men, with the prince at their head, would always preponderate. And indeed, till fatal experience opened the eyes of men, who could foreſee that kings would ever ſink to ſuch a degree of infatuation, as to divorce themſelves from their people, and combine with the avowed enemies of all the rights of man? A conduct like this is ſuch an outrage to nature and to reaſon, that it was neceſſary it ſhould actually happen, before the poſſibility of it could be believed. It was not in the ſimplicity of ancient manners to expect ſo ſhocking a revolution.

'To conſider, on the other hand, the feelings of ſovereigns in that early period of mankind, he on whom the ſupreme authority devolved, muſt be deemed the party that had moſt reaſon to be alarmed. For, if the father of a family, who has a charge of five or ſix children to educate, and to eſtabliſh in the world, feels an inceſſant anxiety that plants thorns upon his pillow, what muſt be the caſe with the chief of a family which is counted by millions?

'He muſt have reaſoned with himſelf in this manner: "The compact which I make with my people, binds me to live for their good only: the repoſe of my life muſt be devoted to their happineſs. I engage myſelf by a ſolemn oath to regard the good of the community in every legiſlative act, and to ſubmit my own will to the ſpirit of the laws. In proportion to the power committed to me, my natural liberty is abridged. The more my ſubjects confide in me, the ſtronger are the obligations I am under. For the frailties of my nature, my errors, and my paſ-

ſions, I render myſelf accountable; I give my people a kind of juriſdiction over me; and, in ſhort, by conſenting to reign, I abdicate myſelf." 'The private man is, as it were, annihilated, to make room for royalty to engroſs the ſoul. Can there be a more generous ſacrifice? an engagement of ſo ſolemn a nature? And yet theſe were the ſentiments of Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius—"*I have nothing properly my own*," ſaid one of them; "*My very palace is not mine*," was the declaration of the other. The few of their ſtamp thought the ſame.

'In the appendages of ſovereignty, vulgar error makes only ſome external circumſtances of parade, which ſerve to awaken envy, ſuch as palaces, the ſplendour of a court, the homage that is paid, together with the pomp and magnificence which policy attached to the regal ſtate, in order to give it ſanction and authority. And yet, amidſt all this brilliancy, the ſovereign is no more than mere man, overwhelmed with ſplendid cares, diſtracted with anxieties; a ſelf-conſuming votariſt for the public good, and a victim to his duty, if he be zealous to perform it; an object of ſcorn if he neglect it, and of deteſtation ſhould he betray it. Under perpetual reſtraint, and fluctuating for ever betwixt good and evil, he finds himſelf environed with enemies to his quiet, with painful vigils, devouring cares, a tedious apathy, that make him weary of himſelf, and ends in a diſtaſte to every thing. Behold there the portrait of a king! It is true, invention has exhauſted itſelf to make his enjoyments counterbalance his cares; but his cares are numberleſs, and his pleaſures are confined within the ſcanty circle of his wants. The higheſt luxury is not ingenious enough to give him one new organ of ſenſation; and while pleaſures ſolicit him on every ſide, nature, quite haraſſed down, forbids enjoyment, and the palled appetite refuſes all. Thus every thing about him is ſuperfluity; his extenſive palace is but a void immenſe, of which he occupies a little corner; under crimſon curtains and gilded ceilings he ſeeks in vain that ſweet repoſe which dwells in the peaſant's cottage; and

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at his table, the pleaſure of the monarch ends when appetite craves no more.'

'I perceive,' ſaid Tiberius, 'that every thing cannot be enjoyed, where every thing abounds; but is the pleaſure of chooſing nothing in the account?'

'Alas, young man!' exclaimed Beliſarius, 'my worthy young man! you are not acquainted with that incurable diſeaſe, ſatiety. It is the moſt fatal langour of the mind. Are you acquainted with the cauſe of it? The power of enjoying with facility makes us lifeleſs, and diſguſted at every thing. Either our deſires have not time to revive, or they revive only to loath the affluence that invites too ſoon. Art has wearied itſelf in ſtudying delicacies to provoke and quicken the languid appetite; but the powers of perception are decayed, the inlets of pleaſure are obſtructed, the incentives to action are extinguiſhed in the ſoul, and delight itſelf has loſt both its allurements and its gratifications. Woe to the man who can command every thing with a wiſh! for as, on the one hand, the predominant idea of a total privation ſaps all the vigour of the mind, by fixing a train of corroding reflections; ſo, on the other, a conſtant habit of enjoyment gives inſipidity to what were otherwiſe exquiſite, and thus life loſes its reliſh.'

'You will grant me, however,' interpoſed Tiberius, 'that there are refined and ſenſible delights, in their nature proper for the gratification of a monarch, which are always ſure to give rational enjoyment without the danger of diſguſting by repetition.'—'As for inſtance?' ſays Beliſarius.—'The love of glory, for inſtance,' replied the young man.—'But what ſort of glory?'—'Why of all the various claſſes of glory, renown in arms muſt hold the foremoſt place.'—'Very well; that is your poſition: and do you think the pleaſure that ſprings from conqueſt has a ſincere and laſting charm in it? Alas! when millions are ſtretched in mangled heaps upon the field of battle, can the mind in that ſituation taſte of joy? I can make allowance for thoſe who have met danger in all its ſhapes; they may be permitted to congratulate themſelves, that

they have escaped with their lives; but in the case of a king born with sensibility of heart, the day that spills a deluge of human blood, and bids the tears of a natural affection flow in rivers round the land, that cannot be a day of true enjoyment. I have more than once traversed over a field of battle; I would have been glad to have seen a Nero in my place; the tears of humanity must have burst from him. I know there are princes who take the pleasure of a campaign, as they do that of hunting, and who send forth their people to the fray, as they let slip their dogs; but the rage of conquest is like the unrelenting temper of avarice, which torments itself, and is to the last insatiable. A province has been invaded; it has been subdued; it lies contiguous to another not yet attempted: desire begins to kindle; invasion happens after invasion; ambition irritates itself to new projects, till at length comes a reverse of fortune, which exceeds, in the mortification it brings, all the pride and joy of former victories. But to give things every flattering appearance, let us suppose a train of uninterrupted success: yet, even in that case, the conqueror pushes forward, like another Alexander, to the limits of the world, and then, like him, re-measures back his course, fatigued with triumphs, a burthen to himself and mankind, at a loss what to do with the immense tracts which he has depopulated, and melancholy with the reflection that an acre of his conquests would suffice to maintain him, and a little pit-hole to hide his remains from the world. In my youth I saw the sepulchre of Cyrus; a stone bore this inscription: "*I am Cyrus, he who subdued the Persian empire. Friend, whoever thou art, or wherever thy native country, envy me not the scanty space that covers my clay-cold ashes**." Alas! said I, turning aside from the mournful epitaph, is it worth while to be a conqueror!'

Tiberius interrupted him with astonishment; 'Can these be the sentiments of Belisarius?'—'Yes, young man, thus thinks Belisarius: he is able to decide upon this subject. Of all the plagues which the pride of man

* Vide Plutarch's life of Alexander.

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has engendered, the rage of conqueſt is the moſt deſtructive.'—'I muſt give up the point,' ſays Tiberius, 'but ſtill there is a prerogative of enjoyment, a gratification worthy of kings, and that is the ſupreme delight of ſerving mankind, a pleaſure ſpringing from the happineſs of millions.'—'Ay!' replied Beliſarius, 'if a king could be ſure of making a nation happy, his acceſſion were an object of envy; aſcending his throne he would riſe to the great pre-eminence of diſpenſing public good, and guiding the reins of government for the welfare of mankind. This would be a ſacred privilege! that a generous mind ſhould ſacrifice the repoſe of life to this great ambition would not be a matter of aſtoniſhment. But addreſs yourſelf to the auguſt old man who now reigns over you, and deſire to be informed by him, whether to diſcharge the duties of his ſtation is an eaſy taſk?'—'That a prince has done his utmoſt,' replied Juſtinian, 'to promote the welfare of his ſubjects, to make their burthen light, and to deſerve the love of his people, a nation may ſometimes be willing to believe.'

'They may believe it,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'and ſome princes, even during their lives, have obtained that glorious ſuffrage. It has been the recompenſe of their upright government; their ſweeteſt retribution. But without ſome ſingular event to give ſincerity to public teſtimonials, unleſs ſome great and trying conjuncture happen, when the ſentiments of the people may be ſuppoſed to burſt forth in the honeſt effuſion of their hearts, what prince can flatter himſelf that the addreſſes he receives are not ſuborned? How can he perſuade himſelf that he hears the real ſenſe of the nation? His courtiers vouch for it; but who is reſponſible for them? While the ſong of revelry echoes through the palace, how ſhall he be aſſured that in the remoter parts of his dominions the dome of the viceroy is not filled with the complaints of injured men, and the cottage of the labourer with groans of miſery? The public feſtivals are nothing but ſcenes acted before him, and the applauſe he meets is too often preconcerted. He ſees the vileſt of mortals canonized for deities; and

though the vain tyrant, whose days are spent in one continued round of voluptuousness, may imbibe the incense which adulation offers, yet the man of virtue, who made his reign a painful endeavour to do all the good that depended on him, closes an honourable life in anguish, and descends to the tomb of his ancestors without ever being sure that he had one sincere friend. When I reflect that Justinian is in this situation, and that he is likely to carry with him to his grave a persuasion that Belisarius was a traitor, and never loved him, I own myself sorely grieved: it is a stab to my very heart.'

'No!' exclaimed the emperor with impetuosity, (and then recollecting himself suddenly) 'No,' said he, in a more deliberate accent, 'a prince is not always unhappy to such a degree, as not to know that in the course of his reign he has been truly loved.'

'Be it so,' replied Belisarius; 'he knows that he is loved, and yet even this sweet reflection is dashed with bitterness. Certain it is, the good of his people must be dear to him, in proportion as he thinks himself dear to them; and in consequence, whatever good he does, or whatever evil he wards off from them, the account appears to him in the general mass of good and evil, so inadequate to his wishes, and at length, in the evening of a long and stormy life, he seriously puts the question, "*What good have I done?*" 'Struggling with adversities, and yet unable to subdue them, what must be his regret when he sits down conscious of his feeble efforts, and sees himself a slave to the emergencies of the day, obliged to govern by expedients only? Marcus Aurelius is the prince upon record who best deserved to see the world happy under his administration, and yet what a reign was his? A scene of wild commotion, in which all the accumulated ills of life seemed to crowd themselves together. One would have thought it an insurrection of all nature, a general conspiracy to baffle every effort of wisdom and of virtue. It is a melancholy task, that he who raised a temple to *Beneficence*, was doomed to see the blackest period of distress and misery. But not to go so far back for

examples,

examples; was ever a reign more diſtinguiſhed for activity, for vigour, and apparent ſucceſs, than this of Juſtinian? A ſeries of war and victory in three quarters of the world for thirty years together; the loſſes of a century repaired in one reign; the people of the North and of the Weſt exterminated beyond the Danube and the Alps; tranquillity eſtabliſhed through all the provinces of Aſia; kings overthrown, and led in triumph; the deſolation of a plague, the waſte of invaſions; and the ruin of earthquakes effaced almoſt from the memory of man by the reſtoring hand of unwearied virtue; places of defence and temples without number, the former built from the ground, and the latter decorated with every ſplendid ornament! Theſe were the works of Juſtinian's reign; imperial works! how glorious! how magnificent! And yet what a falling off! Behold him now in the decline of old age; what has he done? That victorious arm was never able to fix the empire upon a durable foundation; at this very inſtant it totters to its ruin; that is at laſt the cloſe of all his labours, the fruit of ſo many triumphs.—Let this, Tiberius, be a leſſon to you; let it inſtruct you to view with pity the ſplendid miſery of kings, to rejudge their actions with lenity, and, in particular, to conceive no diſaffection to a venerable ſovereign, on account of the ills which he has let fall, or the good which he has omitted to do.'

'You alarm me,' ſaid Tiberius, 'with theſe reflections; my firſt advice to any friend of mine upon a throne ſhall be to abdicate it.'—'To abdicate it!' replied Beliſarius; 'that you will not do; courage will never be the adviſer of deſertion. Were you ever induced by peril and fatigue to abandon the ſword? there is no difference in this view of things, between a ſword and a ſceptre. It is incumbent upon every man to crowd into his life all the duties he can. Endeavour not to conceal from your friend that he muſt inevitably be a victim to thoſe about him; but make him ſenſible, at the ſame time, that there is a pleaſure as well as pain in being thus ſacrificed, and that, in order to inſure his true recompenſe, he muſt

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inflame his imagination with the enthuſiaſm of public virtue, and muſt thence deduce the ſweet reward of all his generous labours.'—'And where is this reward to be met with?' interpoſed Tiberius.—'It conſiſts,' returned Beliſarius, 'in our own inward conſciouſneſs; it is purely ſentimental, and ſprings out of the reflection that we find within our breaſts, the active principles of humanity, ſocial affection, generous ſympathy, thoſe amiable qualities which conſtitute the dignity of our nature, and merit the approbation of earth and heaven. Can you imagine that a king has ſuch contracted views as to riſe in a morning to balance the account of what he may merit in the courſe of the day? His language to himſelf, I take it, muſt be, awake! ariſe! and with you let juſtice and benevolence open their eyes on the world. Diveſt yourſelf of little ſelfiſh paſſions, of your ſchemes of private gratification, and reſign even the repoſe of your life. You do not live for yourſelf alone; the ſoul of a whole people ſtirs within you; your will is the will of millions, and properly promulgated, receives the ſanction of law. Let the law then be the rule of your government, and remember that on the happineſs of numbers your own intereſt is grafted. You are moved, Tiberius! your hand trembles in mine! let me bid you reſt aſſured, that the very tears of virtue have inexpreſſible delight. Virtue, it is true, cannot aſcertain a conſtant good unmixed with evil; but is there ſuch a thing in human life? And if there is, for whom is it reſerved? For the inactive, the wicked, and unworthy? The miſchief which a patriot prince cannot remove, draws tears from his humanity, but they are not the bitter tears of envy, remorſe, and turpitude. They are the pleaſing ſorrows of Titus, who weeps that he has loſt a day: they are pure as the ſource from which they ſpring. You may therefore aver to your friend, and pray aver it with energy, as if ſome god were breathing through you, that armed with virtue he will never know the pang of envying the fortunes of the vile and wicked. But this conſtancy of mind, this true ſupport of virtue, is not the ſpontaneous growth of the human breaſt;

breaſt; the ſpirit of a young prince muſt be attempered to it; and how he is to be initiated, we will make the ſubject of to-morrow's interview.'

'He moulds me to his will,' ſaid Tiberius to Juſtinian; 'his power over my ſoul is irreſiſtible; he ſinks, inflames, and elevates at his own diſcretion.'—'He tears my very heart,' replied the emperor; then fetched a deep ſigh, and remained a conſiderable time in penſive ſilence. To diſpel the gloom the court tried all its gaieties, but every endeavour was fruitleſs importunity. On the morrow, having ſignified his inclination to take a ſolitary walk, he ſtruck into a neighbouring wood; Tiberius was there in waiting, and together they went to their appointment. The young man did not fail to revive the topic which had been promiſed, and Beliſarius proceeded in the following manner.

CHAP. IX.

'IT has been made a queſtion, whether it be poſſible to love virtue for its own ſake only? So generous a principle, it muſt be acknowledged, is the ſublime inſtinct of certain choſen ſpirits. I call it an inſtinct: for whenever it is the work of reflection, it degenerates into intereſt; nor can this propoſition be underſtood to derogate from human nature. I will ſhew you, that virtue, like friendſhip, refines itſelf by degrees from the droſs of intereſt, and takes a more exalted nature: the operations of one will illuſtrate the other.

It is to views of convenience, of pleaſure, and utility, that friendſhip owes its origin. The effect in the proceſs is detached from the cauſe: the motives ſubſide, and the ſentiment produced keeps poſſeſſion of the heart; a ſecret charm inſinuates itſelf, and by the force of habit mingles with our very love of exiſtence. In this ſtate of the mind, uneaſy ſenſations may take place inſtead of promiſed joys; but ſtill, the heart which has taſted of friendſhip will, rather than renounce it, forego all the ſoothing comforts it expected to enjoy. Friendſhip is a ſympathy which commences in gaiety and exultation, and gathers ſtrength

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in the hour of affliction. The ſame may be affirmed of virtue. To engage your affections, it muſt firſt attract by an appearance of the agreeable or the uſeful: for before we are enamoured of her, we love ourſelves; and till we know of the real ſweets of virtue, we look for gratifications very different from what ſhe affords. When Regulus, in the ſpring of life, beheld her for the firſt time, ſhe ſtruck him with the pomp of triumph and ſplendour of glory. Whether he abandoned her afterwards, when ſhe had nothing to give but fetters, the torture, and the funeral pile, need not now be mentioned.

'You muſt therefore begin by ſounding the temper of the prince, and diſcovering the objects that chiefly ſtrike his fancy. To be free, powerful, rich, obeyed by his ſubjects, eſteemed through life, and happy in the proſpect of future fame, will perhaps be the prevailing deſires. Inform him, therefore, that from virtue alone he can obtain what he pants for, and you will not miſlead him.

'There is a ſecret in the art of governing, too often concealing from the pride of kings, in which every well diſpoſed prince ought to be early inſtructed, and that is contained in this ſober truth: there is no abſolute power except that of the laws, and he who aims at deſpotiſm enſlaves himſelf. For what is law but the will of the whole community, expreſſed by one man, in the ſame manner as his power is the whole force of the ſtate collected in himſelf? But when the will of man is erected in oppoſition to the whole, the force of the body-politic will then be ſet againſt the prince, who reſorts to the practice of dividing, weakening, and ſubverting the ſtrength of the kingdom; or, perhaps, at length he is in open arms againſt it. Inſtead of being the father of his people, he is now their tyrant: he governs by intrigue, and ſtrives by little arts of policy to delude, ſurpriſe, alarm, and terrify his ſubjects into a tame ſubmiſſion; or elſe he reſorts to his agents of deſtruction, who ſell the blood of their countrymen, and march ſword in hand through the realm, covering all with deſolation, till murder has taken off every honeſt man who dared to reſiſt the yoke and vindi-

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cate the rights of nature. Hence the rage of civil commotions, in which a brother ſays to his brother, die, or yield to the tyrant, who has paid me for cutting your throat. Proud of an uſurpation maintained by force of arms, or founded on ſuperſtition, the tyrant congratulates himſelf: but let his heart tremble within him, if he ever ceaſe to pamper the pride, or control the licentiouſneſs, of his deteſted party. While they ſerve him, they chain him to themſelves by his fears; and for the obedience they pay their captive king, they demand in return impunity for their crimes. Being thus grown the oppreſſor of one part of his ſubjects, he is a ſlave to the other; as mean and abject to the bad, as fierce and domineering to the good. Conſtrained to manage with his accomplices, he is obliged to ſtudy how to gratify them, that the paſſions which lifted on his ſide may not revolt from him; for he knows their fierce and dangerous quality, ſince they have already marked their way with ruin, and broke aſunder all the ties of nature and humanity. The tiger, trained to the chaſe, and educated by man to the ſkill of devouring, will fly at his maſter, if a ſhare of the prey be with-held from him. The tyrant's compact with his factors of miſchief is preciſely the ſame.

'The ſupreme power, therefore, as it approaches to tyranny, becomes feeble in proportion, and depends for ſupport upon the men who have leagued themſelves againſt the conſtitution. It muſt be ever attentive to the tools of a party, leſt they ſhould make a defection to the intereſts of their country. Every mark of compliance, reſpect, and the moſt ſervile toleration, muſt be paid to them, to the utter ſubverſion of juſtice, and the neglect of all ſound policy. The prince muſt deſcend to the meaneſt deferences, the moſt flagrant partiality, the humbleſt diſſimulation, and even ſo low as to wear the ſmiles of content, with reſentment at his heart.

'The prince that would govern according to the true ſpirit of civil policy, muſt make the laws the ſole rule of his conduct: for his authority is inferior to the laws, founded upon the will and the whole force

force of the community. He will, in that caſe, know no enemies but the baſe and wicked, the common enemies of ſociety. Whoever intereſts himſelf in the ſupport of order and the public tranquillity, is an aſſertor of the ſovereign authority which protects him. Every citizen, in the declared foe of his prince, beholds his own perſonal enemy. Party-diviſion is baniſhed from the ſtate, and the ſovereign, in league with his people, is rendered rich and powerful by the wealth and power of his people. Under no neceſſity to intrigue with parties, he reigns in freedom, perhaps in juſtice, with his crown firm and unſhaken on his head. His adminiſtration, fixed upon the baſis of law and public ſecurity at home, becomes reſpectable to foreign powers; and, as he is never inſtigated by caprice and pride to wage a war of ambition, his armies, maintained and regulated under proper diſcipline, are ready to take the field with vigour and with ſpirit, when the public cauſe demands the exertion of the ſtate againſt the author of civil diſcord, or the foreign uſurper. Oh, my friend! let juſtice be the baſis of the ſupreme authority, and the love of a grateful people will not fail to be its moſt invigorating principle, and its beſt ſupport. The ſlave will fight reluctantly for his priſon and his chains; but the citizen, who is ſecure in his civil rights, who loves his prince, and is reciprocally beloved, will hazard himſelf in the defence of the authority to which he is indebted for his own protection. Amidſt the hardſhips of the campaign, and the perils of battle, he feels himſelf inflamed with the idea that he is ſtruggling for his fires and his altars, for all that can be dear to him.'

'Ah! theſe leſſons,' ſaid Tiberius, 'ſink deep into my heart: they are delivered with words that burn; they kindle a flame in the ſoul. When ſhall I be able to inſpire the breaſt of kings with ſentiments like theſe!'

'It is now clear,' replied Beliſarius. 'that the true ſplendour and authority of ſovereigns are founded on juſtice; that virtue and benificence ſtrengthen the foundation; and the moſt abſolute prince is he who reigns in

the hearts of his people.'—'From what you have ſaid,' interpoſed Tiberius, 'it is now plain that true policy and reaſon are convertible terms; and that the art of governing conſiſts in following the ſuggeſtions of wiſdom and of virtue.'—'You are perfectly right,' replied Beliſarius; 'nothing can be more ſimple, more eaſy in the practice, and ſure of its effect. The emperor Juſtin, originally an honeſt peaſant of Illyria, who came to a throne from the plough, found the way to endear his adminiſtration to mankind. Was it owing to his ſkill in politics? Far from it; it was owing to the rectitude of his mind, and the amiable diſpoſitions of his heart. Were it my lot to govern, I ſhould endeavour to occupy that great example. Far be from the breaſt of a prince that ſly, ſlow policy, that looks with an oblique eye upon every thing. It looks about indeed with a kind of indirect prudence, and recoils in time from rocks and precipices; but it is inquietude at beſt. How unlike the ſerenity enjoyed by him who loſes all thoughts of ſelf in the love of millions, and is therefore leſs expoſed than the moſt wary, circumſpect, and ſuſpicious tyrant! But the misfortune is, the prince is too often alarmed by artful and deſigning men: he is taught to conſider his people as an enemy to be dreaded; and that dread, as ſoon as impreſſed, leads reality to the ideal danger; for it gives birth to miſtruſt, and miſtruſt is the mother of hatred and of malice.

'You have obſerved that a prince, a man almoſt ſolitary and without connexions, has his cares and wants contracted into very ſcanty limits; that at his eaſe he commands all the real good in life; that he is narrowly circumſcribed; and all beyond a ſmall circle is vanity, illuſion, and deceit. While nature preſcribes to him to be moderate in his deſires, all things about him irritate his paſſions, and ſtimulate intemperance. Alas! were it his aim to live in harmony with his people, he would have no party but his ſubjects, no intereſts but that of the ſtate. How differently are things circumſtanced at preſent! All confidence is extinguiſhed; the neceſſity of

being ever guarded againſt a turbulent and ſeditious populace is inculcated; and a ſtanding army is maintained to terrify thoſe who ſhould be cheriſhed by their ſovereign. By theſe means the prince lives at variance with his ſubjects; his party is formed, and ambition, with a train of inordinate deſires, ſtalks at the head of it. This hydra of faction is ever inſatiable, and yet unconſtitutional means muſt be tried to ſatisfy its rapacity. Here then is the firſt ſpring of that monſtrous diſtinction, which we have known in the empire, between the provinces of the people and the provinces of the emperor, between the intereſts of the ſubject and thoſe of the prince. The idea of property ſhould never enter the thoughts of the ſovereign. When once his imagination is ſtruck with it, it follows that the ſecurity of the crown and his life ſeems to depend upon that property, and by a natural progreſs avarice takes poſſeſſion of him. He thinks himſelf enriched by the impoveriſhment of his people; and whatever rapacity has ſeized is ſet down as clearer gain. In proportion as the ſubject is plundered, he appears to the jealous prince reduced to a deep ſubjection. Hence ſchemes of rapine on the one hand, diſcontent and repining murmurs on the other; and hence the dark ſeeds of civil war, which, like ſmothered flames, lie brooding in the very heart of the ſtate, and at length break out in a ſudden eruption all over the land. Of his private coffers the ſovereign now thinks he has the full advantage: he congratulates himſelf on the prudence which ſettled his meaſures ſo long before hand: but, ſhort-ſighted man! he little perceives that, by being juſt, he would have been above ſuch little timid precautions; and that all the mean, and of courſe cruel, paſſions, which liſt for hire in his cauſe, would be vile and uſeleſs, if virtue were the ſpring of his actions. This, my friend Tiberius, this is the doctrine which the future ſovereign ought to hear from you. Let him once be perſuaded that the ſtate and the ſovereign are but one thing: let him underſtand that this political union conſtitutes his true ſtrength, the baſis of his dignity, his honour, and his

his peace; and ideas of property will then be rejected as ſordid and unworthy*. His ſolid advantage will be placed in the good he procures for his people; and thus his paſſions will transform themſelves to the virtues of a patriot king, juſt and equitable for his own intereſt, moderate upon principles of ambition, and benevolent through every ſelfiſhneſs. It is by conſidering things in this way, my worthy friend, that truth appears the parent of virtue. But truth, I grant you, appears at firſt with an awkward mien at court. He who gains her firſt audience from a king, muſt have been endowed with no ſmall degree of courage. When flattery has taught the pernicious maxims, that princes reign for themſelves alone; that royal independence conſiſts in the gratifications of deſire; and that even caprice is a ſtate-law; the faithful and honeſt councellor who undertakes to refute this notable ſyſtem will not be graciouſly received: but let him be once heard, and he will gain the royal ear; one truth eſtabliſhed, the reſt may be poured upon him with rapidity, for they are ſure of their effect; and the prince, inſtead of dreading, will anticipate the concluſion.

Truth will now derive charms from virtue, and virtue in its turn will lend embelliſhments to truth. It is indiſpenſibly neceſſary that the latter ſhould enlighten the mind; for the inclination of our nature to a good, whoſe value is not explained, is merely a blind, a vague, and uncertain inſtinct. But a deſire to ſerve mankind is virtue, founded on the knowledge of remote and extenſive conſequences. To know the intereſts of humanity is the true ſtudy of a prince. Whatever is juſt, whatever is uſeful, that is truth, and the truth a king ſhould inveſtigate; it is the great band of ſociety; in all buſineſs, in every tranſaction of life, it upholds the chain of moral duties; on mutual wants and mutual aids grafts human happineſs, and makes the author of public good a partaker

* The emperor Trajan was uſed to compare the treaſure of a prince to a ſwelled and diſtempered ſpleen, which enfeebles and conſumes the reſt of the body.

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ker of the bleſſings he beſtows. This is the fit employment of a prince; to this he ſhould dedicate his days; to know himſelf, and the nature of man; to develope the ſecret movements of the heart, the operations of habit, the ſpecific qualities of character, the influence of opinion, the powers and the weakneſſes of our frame; to ſtudy intenſely, and not with frivolous curioſity, but a fixed and ſteady determination of the will, with a perſeverance alarming to flatterers, the temper, the manners, and the reſources of his people, together with the conduct of his miniſters; and in this noble enquiry to let in light to the judgment on every ſide, with a deteſtation of the clandeſtine informer, and a generous encouragement of thoſe who have the ſpirit to call aloud for a redreſs of grievances committed in his name. Theſe are the things which conſtitute the love of truth; and thus, ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to Tiberius, thus every prince will love it, who is, as he ought to be, perſuaded, that to be great, he muſt be juſt and upright. In conveying theſe ſentiments to him, you will inſtruct him how to be free and independent in the midſt of a court; for it is there he muſt be jealous of his liberty. To make him ſenſible of this, will be the arduous part of your undertaking: this is the point which you muſt labour with aſſiduity and firmneſs.'—'It ſhall be done,' ſaid Tiberius, 'when I am armed with your inſtructions.'—Here the converſation broke off, and they took leave of each other.

'It has happened by ſome ſtrange fatality,' ſaid the emperor, 'that in all ages and countries the friends of mankind have been hated by thoſe who are bound to be the fathers of the people. The popularity of Beliſarius was his only crime: it was that alone provoked his enemies, and perhaps alarmed my jealouſy. Alas! they made me fear him; it had been better if I had endeavoured to imitate him.'

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

ABOUT the ſame hour of the following day, Beliſarius, expecting his viſitors, ſeated himſelf again under the old oak, upon the road, where he had received them the night before. He ſaid, in a low ſoliloquy, 'to have found two virtuous men, who beguile me from myſelf, and enter thus into a diſcuſſion of the great objects of humanity, is a circumſtance that alleviates my misfortunes. How ſoothing to contemplate the ſocial intereſts of man! My afflictions are ſoftened by it! The very idea of being but remotely conducive to the welfare of nations has raiſed me above myſelf, and now I ſee how the diffuſion of benevolence to a whole people aſſimilates man to his Divine Creator.'

Juſtinian and Tiberius overheard theſe laſt words as they approached. 'You are warm in the praiſe of beneficence,' ſaid the emperor; 'and indeed beneficence, of all the virtues, affords the moſt endearing and the ſweeteſt ſenſations. Happy the man whoſe lot it is to enjoy ſo noble a pleaſure!'—'And yet this ſupreme delight muſt be taſted with moderation,' replied the hero, 'for even goodneſs itſelf, if not conducted by wiſdom and juſtice, degenerates into an open vice. Attend, young man,' ſaid he, to Tiberius, 'and mark what I have to offer on this head.

'Of ſovereign authority the higheſt act is the diſtribution of favours and marks of grace: this partakes of the nature of beneficence, and is therefore a pleaſing exertion of power; but in the exerciſe of it, it is requiſite that the prince ſhould be guarded againſt ſeduction. The whole of his intelligence muſt ariſe from thoſe who approach his perſon; and of that number there is not one who does not for ever inculcate, that the ſeat of majeſty is in the court; that all regal ſplendour is derived from the brilliant appearance that enlivens the palace; and that the moſt valuable prerogative of the crown diſplays itſelf by a profuſion of favours, which are ſtyled the munificence of the ſovereign. Gracious heaven! the munificence! it is the ſubſtance of the people he beſtows; the

ſpoils of the poor and indigent! Thus the prince is deceived by words: adulation and treachery beſiege his throne; aſſiduity for ever pays its court; and the habit of refuſing nothing gains upon the credulous ſovereign, who little thinks of the tears extorted from the poor by the extravagance of the court: exultation fills the palace, and every room echoes with praiſes of the royal munificence. That munificence aſſumes the mien of virtue, and wealth is ſquandered without conſidering from whence it came. Alas! would kings reflect how their ſplendour grows out of the miſery of others; and for the ſake of an ungrateful crew, what a number groan in wretchedneſs! But, Tiberius, the prince who has one true friend, will be ſure to know this; and he will know beſides, that true beneficence conſiſts more in œconomy than laviſh diſtribution; that every partial grant is injuſtice to merit, and from that injuſtice ſpring all the worſt evils that can diſtract a ſtate.'

'You behold the munificence of ſovereigns,' ſaid Tiberius, 'with an eye of ſeverity.'—'I conſider it in its true light,' replied the hero, 'as a mere perſonal attachment, which, in the choice of men for public offices, counteracts the natural courſe of juſtice, of nature, and of reaſon. For juſtice appropriates honours to virtue, and rewards to merit: for the arduous buſineſs of high employments nature brings forth great abilities and conſummate talents; and ſurely reaſon directs that of men the beſt poſſible uſe ſhould be made? but partiality confers the recompenſe due to virtue upon elegant and poliſhed vice; and thus complaiſance is preferred to honeſt zeal, adulation to truth, and meanneſs to elevation of ſoul. The ſuperficial gift of pleaſing, as if it were ſuperior to every other gift of nature, aſpires to all the favours of the crown, and generally engroſſes them.—From theſe premiſes it may be inferred, that partiality in the diſtribution of favours is the ſure mark of a bad reign; and the prince who reſigns into the hands of a favourite the honour of his crown and the welfare of his people, brings matters to this dilemma; he either ſets

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a ſmall value upon what he confides to his favourite, or he aſcribes to his own choice the power of transforming the ſouls of men, as if he were able to mould a ſtateſman or an hero out of a ſuperannuated ſlave or a youthful profligate.'

'That,' ſaid Tiberius, 'would be an attempt of the moſt abſurd futility; but employments abound in all ſtates, which may be competently filled by men of very ordinary talents.'

'Not a ſingle employment,' replied Beliſarius, 'which does not demand, if not an able, at leaſt an honeſt man; but royal favour is little ſolicitous about the one or the other: on the contrary, both are neglected; or, ſtill worſe, they are ſure to meet all the little indignities of a ſcornful repulſe. Hence every talent dies in its bloom, and every virtue withers in the bud. Of talents and of virtues emulation is the vivifying ſoul; but partiality is immediate death. The ſtate in which this vice prevails, may be compared to thoſe waſte and deſolate tracts, which certain uſeful plants ſpontaneouſly ſhoot up, but are robbed of their nutriment by the briars and brambles that infect the land: and yet this image of phyſical evil does not fully expreſs the political miſchief; for under a reign of favouritiſm, the briars and the brambles are cheriſhed, and every ſalutary plant is eradicated and trampled under foot.'

'You ſeem to aſſume,' ſaid Tiberius, 'that the royal favour invariably wants its due diſcernment of ſpirits, and is never able to make a right choice of men.'

'Rarely, if ever,' replied Beliſarius, 'inſomuch that if the ſervants of the public were choſen by lot, it would be a more infallible mode of election. Partiality grants its favours to thoſe only who intrigue for them: but merit diſdains the little arts of intrigue; and that manly pride is decyphered by court interpreters into neglect of the ſovereign, who therefore repays it with calm diſdain, while the aſſiduity of low ambition reaps every advantage. To a prince thus prejudiced, what acceſs can there be for the ſage or the hero? Can they degrade themſelves to the

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pliancy of ſlaves? Can dignity of mind ſubmit to be a cringing candidate for court favour? If nobility of birth gives a title to approach the perſon of the ſovereign, what part is to be acted in a circle of favourites, by truth, integrity, and honour? Are they likely to excel in the dexterities of flattery and diſſimulation? Will they condeſcend to pry into the paſſions of their maſter, and explore the ſecret propenſities of his heart? The characters of the ſycophant, the diſſembler, and the falſe friend, will be better played by others, who know how to touch the ſtring that ſounds gratefully to the royal ear, and to fly over that which will offend. Virtue would appear awkward in the attempt. The favourite will acquit himſelf with grace in all theſe particulars, but ſtill it will ever be a million to one that he is unworthy of the diſtinction he enjoys.'

'The favourite of a diſcerning, juſt, equitable prince,' interpoſed the emperor, 'will, moſt probably, be a man of integrity.'

'In the court of a diſcerning, juſt, and equitable prince,' replied Beliſarius, 'there will be no ſuch perſon as a favourite; ſuch a prince will be worthy of friends, and he will have them: but favour will do nothing for them. A faithful ſervant would bluſh to be ſo enriched. If ever there was a faithful ſervant, the emperor Trajan had ſuch an one to boaſt of in his miniſter Longinus. That true and worthy friend of his maſter was taken priſoner by the Dacians: the king of that people ſignified to the emperor, that unleſs he acceded to the conditions of peace propoſed to him, the captive miniſter ſhould be put to death. And what was Trajan's anſwer? He left it to the honour of Longinus to decide, as Regulus had formerly done in his own caſe. Behold there the model of public characters! Thoſe are the men I have in view! How glorious to be the friend of ſuch a prince! Longinus ſaw the bright occaſion, and with a ſublime of virtue diſpatched himſelf, leſt pity ſhould take poſſeſſion of the emperor, and incline him to an act of partiality or perſonal regard.'

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'I am overpowered by the weight of your reaſonings,' ſaid Tiberius: 'yes, I now perceive, that the public weal, when rightly underſtood, gives no latitude to the affections of the ſovereign: but are there not incidents, unconnected with the intereſts of the people, in which he may reaſonably give a ſcope to his private affections?'

'I anſwer in the negative,' replied Beliſarius: 'the prince has no poſitive unconnected intereſt; every thing is relative to the whole. The ſmalleſt matters are of importance, and even the very civilities of a king muſt be addreſſed with caution. Royal favour, it has been ſaid, is but a partial evil, and diſplays itſelf only in little things; but a deviation from the ſtrict rule of right, even in trifles, will ſoon become habitual, and from ſmall irregularities to great exceſs the progreſs is rapid. The circle of the ſovereign's favour enlarges itſelf, and to baſk in the ſunſhine of his ſmiles grows a general deſire; each courtier ſtrives to wriggle himſelf into favour: and the fence thus thrown down, how ſhall a prince reſiſt the ardour of importunity, and the frequency of ſolitation? The fence that ſhould guard him, my beſt Tiberius, is a determination of the will to be always juſt and good, When a principle of uprightneſs is known to guide the choice of men, it muſt then be merit, and merit alone, that can hope for preferment. Talents, exalted qualities, and eminent ſervices, form the only admiſſible claim: the candidate for honours muſt render himſelf worthy of them. Intrigue is diſcountenanced, and emulation is animated. Ambition is obliged to proceed by manly ways, and ſtarting at the thought of being detected, abandons her little ſchemes of perfidy and cunning. How different is the caſe, when the prince is under the influence of perſonal affection? To gain the aſcendant over that affection, becomes the buſineſs of all. He who poſſeſſes the arts of inſinuation, and knows how to cabal with the ſervants of upper ſervants, purſues his drudgery through all its ſtages, and creeps up to preferment, meanly riſing to ſplendid infamy. In the mean time, the man of virtuous pride retires, and with the conſent of all he is reſigned to oblivion.

oblivion. If it ſhould happen that for ſome important ſervice he is called from obſcurity, to make one in the glittering crowd; or if it ſhould be neceſſary to employ him on ſome occaſion worthy of his abilities; ſtanding unconnected with faction, he finds all parties combined againſt him, till at length it is viſible, that he muſt either debaſe himſelf, by counterminding the dark deeds of his enemies, or elſe ſurrender to them at diſcretion. The court where intrigue prevails, is a wild uproar of paſſions, in which the ſtill voice of truth can never be heard. The public good is an unregarded thing, and perſonal affection is the fountain of all praiſe and cenſure; partiality paſſes its deciſions upon all occurrences; and the prince, encompaſſed round with falſehoods, diſtracted with doubt, ſuſpicion, and muſtruſt, ſcarcely ever puts an end to the waverings of his mind, but to terminate in error.

'Why does not he depend upon the evidence of facts?' ſaid Tiberius; 'facts are obſtinate witneſſes, and the teſtimony they give is bold and loud.'

'Facts,' replied Beliſarius, 'are not ſo obſtinate as you imagine: they take a new complexion from the contrariety of reporters. Every enterpriſe is judged by its event; and yet events too frequently give the palm to raſhneſs, and defeat the beſt concerted ſchemes of genius and ability. Men are often more fortunate than wiſe, and there are occaſions when the propoſition is reverſed. In either caſe, the characters of men may ſuffer much from prejudice, and that more particularly in a court, where the colours of good and evil are all derived from the prevailing opinions of party and faction.'

'Juſtinian, in his old age, is a melancholy example,' ſaid the emperor; 'he has been cruelly deceived!'

'Alas! replied Beliſarius, 'who has more reaſon than myſelf to know what has been practiſed upon the credulity of Juſtinian? Who is better acquainted with the ſnares that faction laid for him? It was faction ſent Narſes into Italy, to interrupt the proſperity of Beliſarius. The emperor little imagined that a miniſter of the

the finances would be a dangerous rival of the general: but Narſes had his faction at court, and he ſoon found one in the camp: a ſpirit of diſſention prevailed, and Milan, the bulwark of Italy, was loſt. Narſes was recalled, but too late; the tide of ſucceſs was now ebbing away: Milan had been ſacked, her inhabitants put to the ſword, and all Liguria diſmembered from the empire. That Narſes was pardoned by the emperor I muſt heartily rejoice; for the life of ſo great a man we have an obligation, at leaſt, to the decline of all military diſcipline. In the virtuous days of the republic, for the complicated crimes of diſobedience, and the ſeduction of part of my army, Narſes would have atoned with his head. I was recalled in my turn. To ſucceed me in the command of the army, eleven chiefs, all jealous of each other, were appointed by a new fangled party. Diſcord prevailed in their councils, and they were defeated. By this means we loſt all Italy. The command was transferred to me, but I was a general without an army. I was obliged to traverſe over Thrace and Illyria in queſt of ſoldiers. A ſcanty number, not exceeding four thouſand, was collected together. With this raſh-levied body, who had neither cloathes, horſes, arms, nor proviſions, I marched into Italy. In this condition, what was to be done? With the utmoſt difficulty I prevented Rome from falling into the hands of the enemy. The cabal at court rejoiced at this diſaſtrous proſpect of affairs: "Things are going as we could wiſh," ſaid they; "he is in the laſt extremity, merely ſtanding at a bay little, to be preſently overwhelmed in ruin." 'Amidſt the deſolation of their country, I was the only object of their attention: to ſee my ruin accompliſhed they would have compounded to ſee the ſtate ſhook to its foundations. I demanded a ſupply of men, and I was recalled. Narſes, with a powerful army, was appointed to ſucceed me; and, beyond all queſtion, Narſes had abilities to juſtify the choice. That he was named to the command was perhaps a public benefit; but before I was wounded, the commonwealth received a ſtab: the ruin of Beliſarius was purchaſed at the

expence of the ſtate. There lies the miſchief of party. To raiſe or overturn a ſingle man, an entire army, perhaps an empire, muſt he ſacrificed.'

'Alas!' exclaimed Juſtinian, 'I now perceive the treacherous arts by which your glory was obſcured. What an indelible ſtain to the emperor, thus to have believed the ſuggeſtions of your enemies!'

'My good neighbour,' replied Beliſarius, 'you are little aware of the refinement which court policy has acquired in the arts of deſtruction; you do not know the genius of intrigue, how active it is, how perſevering, how aſſiduous and implacable. Reſpectful and obſequious to the ſentiments of the ſovereign, it manages with caution, and works its effect by degrees, like the drop of water that only oozes at firſt through its fence, ſaps on by imperceptible ſtrokes, and then in one ruſhing torrent bears down all. Cabal and party have this further advantage on their ſide, that the man of honour is without miſtruſt, and of courſe without precaution: he has nothing to oppoſe to the malice of his enemies, but his upright conduct, which is ever diſcoloured by envy, and his honeſt fame, of which the report that rings throughout the realm expires and dies away at the gates of the palace. Envy alone is privileged within the verge of the court, and the character againſt which her ſhafts are aimed is ſure to fall a victim. In the courſe of human contingencies it cannot otherwiſe happen, but that every commander muſt experience the viciſſitudes of fortune, and find his train of victory ſometimes interrupted; of every caſualty envy takes advantage, and makes even accidents a ground of impeachment. Has the commander done all that was poſſible? He ought to have done better; any body but himſelf would have acted upon a different plan; he did not make a right uſe of his opportunities. The charge againſt him is aggravated, and the good he has done dwindles into nothing. The reſult is, that the man who can be uſeful to his country is the moſt dangerous perſon in it. To the misfortune of the public his downfal is effected; and to their greater misfortune, ſome worthleſs

worthleſs wretch is ſure to riſe upon his ruins. Another concomitant evil is, the impreſſion made upon the minds of men by the melancholy proſpect of virtue in diſtreſs, and of vice exulting in proſperity. Public ſpirit grows languid at the reflection, that all the fine incentives of honour are extinguiſhed; guilt is emboldened, the evil conſcience forgets to bluſh, and exceſſes of every kind riot with impunity. Such are the evils that attend a reign of favouritiſm. Judge yourſelf how ſuch a diſpoſition may precipitate the ruin of the ſtate.

'Without doubt,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'it is the moſt dangerous infirmity that ever biaſſed the mind of a prince; but in an old man, who for thirty years has ſtruggled to no purpoſe in the ſtorms of fortune, and at laſt, in ſpite of all his efforts, ſees the tempeſt ready to burſt in ruin on his head; in one thus worn out with age and troubles, may it not be deemed an excuſable weakneſs, if he endeavours to ſweeten his cares, or at leaſt to alleviate them, by indulging the private affections? It will anſwer no purpoſe to be too ſanguine in our hopes; let us not deceive ourſelves with flattering ideas of the public condition: even now the empire, by its own weight, is tottering to its fall. By a length of duration all its vigour is exhauſted, and it muſt ſhare at laſt the common fate which brought the empires of Belus and Cyrus to their deſſolution. Like them it has flouriſhed in ſplendour, and like them it muſt moulder into ruin.'

'I am no fataliſt,' replied Beliſarius, 'in regard to revolutions of government: that would be to give a ſanction to our preſent degeneracy of ſpirit, and make deſpair ſyſtematical. That all ſublunary things, and kingdoms amongſt them, periſh and die away, I am not now to learn; but that nature has traced the bounds of exiſtence to all its productions, ſeems a portion rather problematical. The body natural indeed has its period when the animal functions decay, and calmly we welcome death; but there never does occur a moment in which it is allowed us to deſpair of the commonwealth. The body-politic, it muſt not be diſſembled, is ſubject to convul-

ſions that ſhake its frame, to ſlow diſorders that conſume its vigour, and to ſpaſms that elevate for a while, to plunge it into deeper dejection afterwards. Activity, it is true, ſtrains all its efforts; repoſe is apt to relax; and civil contention breaks the conſtitutional ſtrength: but not one of theſe accidents is mortal in its nature. Nations have been ſaved from the very brink of deſtruction; they have emerged from the very depth of miſery; and, after ſtruggling through the ſevereſt criſis, have been reanimated to a vigour unknown before. The declenſion of ſtates is not therefore marked out; the line is not drawn, like the limits of human life. Old age is unknown to the body-politic; it is the chimera of miſtaken theoriſts. The ſame ardour of hope that inſpires the heart of valour, may extend its influence, and give animation for any length of time. The conſtitution of the empire is now enfeebled, or rather it has ſunk into a languid ſtate: but for every poiſon there is on antidote in nature, and it behoves us to diſcern it.'—Let us inveſtigate it together,' ſaid the emperor; 'there will be ſomething ſoothing in the reſearch: but before we think of the remedy, let us trace the diſorder to its firſt principles.'—'I am willing to enter into the diſcuſſion,' replied Beliſarius, 'and it will furniſh us ample matter for our future meetings.'

CHAP. X.

THE next day Juſtinian was impatient to ſee Beliſarius. He longed to have the veil torn off which hid the lurking miſchiefs of the empire, and he preſſed with eagerneſs to the interview. Beliſarius dated his reflections from the æra of Conſtantine. 'How much is it to be lamented,' ſaid the hero, 'that ſo enlarged a genius, with all that firmneſs, that ſpirit of enterpriſe, ſhould egregiouſly miſtake the fitneſs of the means to produce the end deſired, and exert, for the extinction of the empire more vigour and activity than would have been neceſſary to retrieve its ancient honours! His new ſyſtem of government was a maſter-ſtroke of human wit: the Prætorian bands aboliſhed; the children of the poor and helpleſs

leſs adopted by the ſtate*; the authority of the præfect diſtributed into more hands, and weakened of courſe; the lands upon the frontiers aſſigned to the veteran ſoldier, who formed an Agrarian army for the defence of the empire: this was indeed a wiſe inſtitution, a large and comprehenſive policy. Why did not he adhere entirely to a plan ſo juſt and ſimple? He did not ſee, or he was unwilling to ſee that, to tranſplant the ſeat of empire, it muſt be torn up by the very roots. In vain did he propoſe to himſelf that the city he was founding ſhould be a ſecond Rome; in vain was the latter deſpoiled of its richeſt ornaments for the decoration of the former: it was a mere theatrical ſhifting of ſcenery, the gaudy ſpectacle of a pantomime.'

'You aſtoniſh me,' ſaid Tiberius, interrupting him; 'I was uſed to think the capital of the world more advantageouſly ſituated upon the Boſphorus, in the middle of the two ſeas, and between Europe and Aſia, than in the heart of Italy, upon the banks of a river which ſcarce deſerves the name navigable.'

'Conſtantine thought as you do,' replied Beliſarius, 'and he was miſtaken. The ſtate which is obliged to carry war into foreign territories, muſt be governed by a ſound internal policy, compact within itſelf, and eaſy to be defended. Such was the advantage of Italy. The hand of nature ſeemed to have made it a reſidence for the maſters of the world. The mountains and the ſea which incloſe it formed a ſtrong barrier againſt invaſion: guard but the Alps, and Rome was guarded too. If that fence proved too weak to repel the enemy, the Appennines afforded a ſafe retreat, and ſerved as a rampart to half Italy. It was there that Camillus gave the Gauls a ſignal overthrow; and in that ſpot Narſes obtained his brillant victory over Totila.

* When the parent was unable to maintain his child, the ſtate took the charge upon itſelf, and the infant was educated at the expence of the public: and this law Conſtantine directed to be engraved on marble, that he might perpetuate it through all ſucceſſive ages.

At preſent the empire has no fixed immovable centre; but lies open and expoſed to all the aſſaults of fortune. Aſk the Scythian, the Sarmatian, and the Sclavonian, whether the Heber, the Danube, and the Tanais, are barriers to obſtruct the march? On that ſide Bazantium is our only fence; that its walls are not in due repair is not the circumſtance that grieves me moſt.

'When Rome was the ſeat of empire, the eſtabliſhed policy of government was able to carry the vigour of its laws from the centre to the extremity of the ſtate: all Italy was under its immediate influence, within the reach of the adminiſtration; the law gave the tone to the manners, and the manners in their turn made grave and faithful miniſters of juſtice. We have indeed now the ſame inſtitutions; but as all is tranſplanted from the place of its growth, the conſequence is, that every thing droops, as if regretting its native ſoil. The empire is not collected in itſelf as it was before: it is enlarged, and thereby weakened. The national character has loſt its ſpirit: even the endearing name of country is gone forth amongſt us. Italy was renowned for men who imbibed with their firſt breath the love of their country, and grew to manhood amidſt the exerciſes of the *Campus Martius*. At preſent, where is the cradle, and where the ſchool of warriors? The Dalmatians, the Illyrians, and the Thracians, who are now mingled with us, are in fact as foreign as the Numidians and the Moors. No common intereſt to unite them into one common cauſe, no kindred ſpirit to actuate and inſpire them. "*Remember that you are Romans*," ſaid a commander to his ſoldiers in the days of the old republic; and that ſhort harangue was of efficacy to brace their nerves for labour, and to render them invincible in battle. What animating topic have we to inſiſt upon? Shall we ſay, *Remember that you are Armenians, Numidians, or Dalmatians?* We are no longer one body-politic, and there lies the cauſe of our debility. The projectors of our new ſettlement were not aware that to form that coalition, that unity of intereſts, which we call our country, requires the progreſſive toil of ages, the ſlow and

and imperceptible working of ſentiment, habit, and opinion. Our new city was embelliſhed by Conſtantine with ſtatues of Roman heroes; but, alas! the policy was ineffectual, for the men whoſe images we only ſaw, lived and breathed the flame of liberty in the capital! The genius that inſpired them did not embark on board our ſhips: we imported inanimate marble only. Paulus Emilius, the Scipios, and the Catos, are ſilent here and mute; they are foreigners at Byzantium; but at Rome they harangued the people, and the people underſtood and felt them.'

'I do not perceive,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'but the empire, ſince the ſeat of government was removed, has enjoyed a truer ſtate of peace and ſecurity than it knew at Rome for a ſeries of years. The people there had fallen into degeneracy, and the ſenate ſunk deeper in ſhame and ſervitude.'

'When the adminiſtration is confided to improper hands,' repl.ed Beliſarius, 'the ſtrength and dignity of every ſtate will be impaired, and a train of calamities muſt enſue. At Rome, however, nothing but one good reign was wanting to recal the conſtitution to its firſt principles. Take a view of Adrian's adminiſtration: the ſtate ſeemed under him to riſe out of its ruins. Behold Marcus Aurelius upon the throne: to what an height of glory and magnificence was the condition of the empire raiſed by the conduct of that excellent prince! Roman virtue has been often eclipſed, but not extinguiſhed: whenever a prince appeared of a genius to rekindle the ſpirit of his country, the latent fire was always ready to mount into a blaze. But, alas! every principle of virtue is now deſtroyed, the ſeed muſt be ſown again; and that muſt be the arduous taſk of a long reign, founded in juſtice, moderation, and wiſdom. Nothing but a prodigy of this ſort can redeem us in this juncture. Our very victories may be the ruin of the ſtate. We have an hundred enemies to cope with, and thoſe enemies have but one. An idea is conceived that they may be all ſubdued; and yet one is no ſooner cruſhed, but he riſes again; a freſh

foe is ever ready to find us employment, and by a rapidity of ſucceſſion they give breathing-time to each other. By this diverſion of our arms a conſtant alarm is kept up, and the ſtate, thus diſtracted, grows feeble every day. The march of armies to various and diſtant places conſumes our ſtrength; the vigour of our meaſures ſtrains every nerve, to relax us more in the end; and every victory is a wound which has no time to cloſe. Thus, after an exertion of all the powers of the empire to maintain its own importance, a ſingle day ſhall ſhake it to its foundation, and render the labour of twenty years abortive in a ſingle hour. Recollect how often, under the preſent reign, our ſtandard has been hurried about the world, from the Tiber to the Euphrates, and from the Euphrates to the Danube! And now what is the conſequence? what is the fruit of ſo many victories, under Mundus, Germanicus, Solomon, Narſes, and myſelf, if I may be added to the number? A peace is all we have obtained at laſt.'

'And if our victories exhauſt us,' ſaid the emperor, 'it is right to bring things to that concluſion.'

'To buy a peace,' replied Beliſarius, 'is not the way to prevent the calamities of war. The ſavage of the north has nothing in view but booty; and if he is ſure of gaining it, his motives to frequent excurſions grow the ſtronger. The Perſian need only ſpread an alarm every year through our faireſt provinces in Aſia, and he goes back loaded with our money. A new way of exterminating the plunderer, by holding forth the booty that invites him! The price of peace becomes the principle of war; and our emperors, by exhauſting their ſubjects, have pampered and inflamed the avarice of their enemies.'

'You affect me deeply,' ſaid Juſtinian; 'what bulwark would you oppoſe to the invaſions of the enemy?—' A good army,' replied Beliſarius, 'and above all, a people free and happy! When the barbarians ruſh into our provinces, they are attracted by the love of plunder; and though they leave deſolation and hatred behind them, yet their purpoſe is anſwered if they leave impreſſions of ter-

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ror alſo. The caſe is different with an empire that would maintain its poſſeſſions in ſecurity. If it does not endear its government to mankind, it may as well abdicate; for it is a ſelf-evident propoſition, that all authority founded on fear will grow weak at every remove from the capital, till at laſt, fading by degrees, it is loſt in diſtance. To rule by the medium of fear from Taurus to the Alps, and from Caucaſus to the foot of Atlas, as an impoſſibility in politics. If the ſubject groans under the weight of his grievances, and power ſupports itſelf by the ſweat of the brow, of what moment is it to him, whether Romans or Perſians are his oppreſſors? The authority that burdens us will never be well defended; and the nation that has not ſpirit to reſiſt oppreſſion, will crouch with tame acquieſcence under the firſt deliverer that appears. Would you give ſtability to government? lay your foundation in the affections of mankind; and the affections of mankind are ever attached to the principles of humanity, of beneficence, integrity, public faith, and zeal for the happineſs of millions. Thoſe are the virtues that command a willing people. The ſpirit of the conſtitution is then diffuſed over the whole dominion, alive and active in each diſtant part; the people are all as one hand and one heart, and every province is the ſeat of government.

I ſhall have frequent occaſion to allude to myſelf,' continued Beliſarius; 'and my worthy young man,' ſaid he to Tiberius, 'by appealing to my experience you have made all apology for egotiſm unneceſſary. When I had the conduct of the war in Africa, I conſidered thoſe regions as part of my native country. The regular and ſtrict diſcipline which I eſtabliſhed throughout my army procured the good will of mankind, and attracted plenty from every quarter. In a little time I had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing my camp reſorted to as a ſanctuary by every various people, who crowded to my ſtandard and liſted under me. The day which ſaw me enter Carthage at the head of a victorious army, did not hear a ſingle groan; neither the quiet nor the uſual employments of the citizens ſuffered on the occaſion: induſtry and commerce purſued

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their intereſts, as if it had been a time of profound peace; and, in return for this benefit, felt by all orders of men, it was in my power to become the king of a people who called me their common father. The ſame happened to me in Italy: there the native inhabitants gathered about me in crowds, reſigning themſelves to the empire; and at Ravenna I received the ſupplications of the Goths, imploring their conqueror to be their ſovereign. Behold here the influence, the empire of humanity. Do not ſuſpect that I am here my own panegyriſt: all my merit conſiſted in following the leſſons the very barbarians gave me. Yes, even the barbarians can boaſt their Titus and their Marcus Aurelius. Thodoric and Totila deſerved the love of human kind. Ye cities of Italy!' exclaimed Beliſarius, 'what a contraſt have you ſeen between us and the barbarians! At Naples, in particular, my eyes beheld men, women, and children, ſlaughtered in one common carnage. I flew to their aſſiſtance: I ſnatched the unhappy, the innocent victims from the fury of an incenſed ſoldiery: but I was ſingle in oppoſition to them, and my entreaties were loſt in air; the men whoſe duty it was to ſecond me were intent on plunder. The ſame place was reduced by the generous Totila. Thrice happy prince! he had the glory of ſaving it from the ravage of his troops. His deportment was that of a tender father in the midſt of his family. Humanity cannot diſplay a ſcene more truly pathetic than this generous prince exerting his beſt offices for the protection of a people that ſurrendered to his arms. It was the ſame at Rome; that very Rome which ſaw the officers of the empire, in the midſt of all the horrors of a famine, carrying on the deteſtable trade of a monopoly. It was in this manner our enemies conciliated the affections of mankind. Their juſtice and moderation hurt us more than their valour.

'How, on our part, did we counteract their virtue? In no ſhape whatever: the inhumanity, the avarice, and tyranny of our commanders leagued with the enemy, and ſerved their cauſe. I had no ſooner reſigned the command in Italy, than the ſame Goths, whoſe proffered crown I had

had juſt refuſed, with one general conſent, with a kind of epidemic ſpirit, kindled to indignation by the malverſation of thoſe who ſucceeded me, reſolved at once to ſhake off the yoke. Hence the reign of Totila, and all the misfortunes of Italy. When I had ſubdued the Vandals, it was my ambition to ſettle terms of amity between the empire and the Moors; and I thought I had ſucceeded to my ſatisfaction: but my back was ſcarcely turned, when our honourable plunderers, our chiefs, who made war a gainful trade, our illuſtrious ſons of riot and rapacity, infringed every treaty I had made, and let looſe the moſt horrible violence to pillage their cities and deſolate their fields. By deſperation the Moors were ſoon rouſed to vengeance, and our provinces were deluged with blood. From oppreſſion ſprung revolt, and all the bands of peace were rent aſunder.

'From the ſame cauſes in the heart of the empire the ſame effects have been produced. Imbecility in miniſters, avarice in pro-conſuls, inhumanity and deſpotiſm in the governors of cities and of provinces; theſe are the enormities which I have ſeen in every quarter. To theſe it is owing that every department of government is now become an intolerable charge to the people. In order to enforce a paſſive obedience under the burthen, recourſe is had to meaſures of the moſt grievous nature: the militia has been aboliſhed, and the ſubject has been excluded from the ſacerdotal order; nay, the right of alienating their property has been wreſted from them; and, to crown the whole with what will ſcarcely be believed, they are deprived of the miſerable liberty of becoming bondmen.—Can it be expected that, harraſſed thus cruelly, the people will be reconciled to the yoke that galls them? Can there exiſt in their idea any ties of intereſt, or of duty, between them and their oppreſſors? The burſt of every groan that deſpair and miſery extort is inſtantly proclaimed treaſon; and armies are marched to carry fire and ſword through the provinces—a new and cruel way of reducing mankind to obedience by their total ruin! And then, of what uſe are ſubjects thus reduced, and broken-

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hearted under a load of grievances? A well governed people ſhould be at once both ſpirited and complying: and both theſe qualities would unite, were they not prevented by the pride and arrogance of little tyrants, who too ſoon made the reign of a well diſpoſed prince an odious ſyſtem of cruelty and arbitrary power.

It is upon miniſters, and all the little ſubſtitutes of authority, that a ſovereign muſt depend for the love or the hatred of mankind. He ought therefore to watch them with a careful and a jealous eye. They are too often the moſt cruel enemies he has; for of all the evils that can attend a prince, the averſion of his people is the worſt, and yet that is brought upon him by his officers of ſtate. Whatever they dare for the gratification of ſpleen, pride, avarice, and their mean capricious paſſions, it is all, in miniſterial language, the direction of the ſovereign; it is for the ſupport of government. Though they are the planners of every pernicious project, yet, in carrying it into execution, they are, if you will believe them, but ſervants of the crown; and thus the prince is made the involuntary unconſcious ſcourge of a people he loves.—My dear Tiberius,' continued the hero, 'if ever your royal maſter has the happineſs of embracing you as his friend, let it be your advice never to ſlacken the reins of authority, that all who are under it may feel the curb of juſtice. Every act of petty tyranny committed in the name of the prince, is ſure to ſully the luſtre of his crown with the tears of the afflicted. An evil adminiſtration is a libel upon the character of the ſovereign. But when iniquity is controlled, when corruption is checked, and the grievances of the ſubject redreſſed by a patriot prince, the complaints of injured men will indeed be addreſſed to the throne, but no murmurings againſt it will ever be heard. The indignation of the ſubject will be pointed at its proper objects; it will purſue the authors of public miſchief, while the good and upright ſovereign ſtill poſſeſſes the affections of a grateful people.'

'There is nothing,' interpoſed Juſtinian, 'more beautiful in theory, than a prince attending to the movements of

of every minute wheel in the great machine of government. But the objects are too complicated, and he would be distracted by the multiplicity of views. To hear the complaints of the subject, and to examine things to the bottom, so as to decide in all cases with justice and moderation, would indeed be an illustrious task, but it is greatly above the powers of any prince whatever.'

'Those are the phantoms of difficulty,' replied Belisarius, 'that are conjured up to deter him from the task; but those phantoms, when examined with a steadfast eye, discover themselves to be mere mockery, and they vanish. The art of governing, we shall see to morrow, is by no means so complicated as politic men would make us believe. Farewel, my friends. You see how, of my own accord, I now engage myself more deeply in this discussion than I at first intended. To rule ideal kingdoms is a kind of castle-building which the imagination of man is fond of indulging; and there are few, I believe, who in their visionary reign, and their dreams of power, do not, like myself, think themselves capable of regulating the fate of empires.'—'Political theories,' said Justinian, 'are often the delirious chimeras of the vulgar, but they are at the same time the noble speculations of the sage and the philosopher.'

The emperor withdrew deeply impressed with the reflections and the reasonings he had heard. That very night, at supper, it was observed by the courtiers that the state never knew a better or more flourishing condition. 'Without doubt,' said Justinian, addressing himself to the flattering train, 'the empire must be in a flourishing way, for you riot in abundance: it must be happy also, for you are dissolved in ease and luxury. The people, in your estimate, pass for a mere cypher, and the court with you is deemed the empire.' At these words they all looked down discountenanced. The remark of the emperor was thought to proceed from that spleen which had of late overcast his mind, and which, they all agreed, was entirely occasioned by his late conferences with Tiberius. 'Tiberius,' said they, 'is a young zealot, whose imagination

gination is overheated with the enthuſiaſm of virtue and popular humanity. A man of that character is always dangerous at court; he muſt be removed from the emperor's preſence.'

CHAP. XII.

THE next day, while the new intrigue at court was hatching its deſigns, the blind old hero and his two gueſts reſumed the thread of their diſcourſe.

'The ſovereign,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'who means to be a real, and not a nominal prince, ought to know how to reduce things to their moſt ſimple principles. His firſt care ſhould be to inform himſelf of the true intereſts of his people, and the conduct they expect he ſhould obſerve.'—'That alone,' ſaid Tiberius, 'is a large field of contemplation.'—'But it is not a perplexed contemplation,' ſaid Beliſarius; 'nothing can be more ſimple; for the wants of an individual are the wants of all, and each of us knows intuitively what is good and fit for the whole human ſpecies. As, for inſtance,' ſaid he to the young man, 'if it were your lot to be employed in the labours of huſbandry, what would you expect from the benevolence of your ſovereign?'—'I ſhould expect,' anſwered Tiberius, 'ſecurity for the fruits of my induſtry, and an unmoleſted right, after the duties of the crown were paid, to enjoy my gettings with my wife and children. I ſhould deſire to be protected in my property againſt fraud and rapine, and to ſee myſelf and my family ſafe from violence, injuſtice, and oppreſſion.'—'Very well!' replied Beliſarius; 'in that conſiſts the whole: every citizen, according to his diſtinctive rank, requires the ſame, and nothing more. Now the prince, on his part,' continued Beliſarius, 'what does he demand of his ſubjects?'—'Obedience to his laws, neceſſary ſupplies, and a proper force to ſupport his own dignity, and the authority of government.'—'That again is ſimple and juſt,' ſaid Beliſarius. 'With regard now to the people, in their relation to one another, what are their reciprocal duties?'—'To live in peace and harmony, to injure no man,

man, to leave to every one the quiet poſſeſſion of his own, and in all tranſactions to preſerve an honeſt intercourſe and good faith.'—'In that ſtate of the caſe, my worthy friend,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'we have an epitome of human happineſs; for that end you ſee that law has no need to be voluminous. Twelve tables, at one time, compriſed the laws of Rome; and that time was at leaſt as eligible as the preſent. What we call juſt, is the balance of what is uſeful, and the liquidation of what is coming to each individual from the aggregate of public good. Let equity adjuſt this account, and the code which directs it need not be long. But equity is now embroiled with complications that have ſwelled to an unweildy ſize. This miſchief is owing to the capricious detail of an arbitrary diſpoſition, which ſets up its own caprice in the place of law, and then makes the law as vague and uncertain as that very caprice itſelf: it is owing to a poor puſillanimity, that with ſolicitude is ever inventing new ſnares to entangle civil liberty; it is owing to the pride and jealouſy of power, which never thinks it can make its weight ſufficiently felt; and, in ſhort, it is owing to a vain deſire of ſuperintending a multiplicity of minute objects, which would all work themſelves clear, and be properly adjuſted, without any ſuch ſuperintendance. A digeſt has been made in the preſent reign of edicts and decrees with out number; but, after all, it is the ſchool for lawyers, and not for the people; whereas it is the people who ought to be inſtructed in their duties and their rights. Every citizen ought, in the firſt inſtance, to be his own judge: it is fit, therefore, that every citizen ſhould know diſtinctly and with preciſion what is preſcribed, forbid, and permitted by the law. To this end there need only be a few good laws, ſimple, clear, ſenſible, and eaſy in their application to the actions of men. This would facilitate the adminiſtration of juſtice, and abridge the detail of ſubtilties that now entangle it. For, when the rights and the duties annexed to civil conduct are univerſally felt and underſtood, the ſubject exults in his ſecurity, and acquieſces in ſubordination:

he perceives the aſcertained degree of political liberty, which he gains in return for the reſignation of his natural privileges to the authority of the ſtate; and, finding his own private advantage in the public ſafety, he learns to reverence the wiſdom of that inſtitution which has united both in ſo beautiful a connexion. I would aſk to what reaſon is it to be aſſigned that the ſubject is ſo often refractory to the authority of government? It is becauſe the laws, which limit and abridge the liberty of the people, are ever expounded with rigour; while, on the other hand, thoſe which favour natural freedom receive too often a negligent, a temporizing conſtruction. But this abuſe would be effectually remedied by the fair ſimplicity of a popular code, or a ſyſtem adapted to the capacity of the whole community; from whence it would reſult, that the judges, obſerving mankind ſufficiently inſtructed in the rules of right, nay, in a capacity to appeal from them to a known, preciſe, and determinate law, would be upon their guard not to make it comply with occaſions, or to vary the ſpirit of it according to their own diſcretion.'

'Of laws, which are deſigned to intrench upon the rights of the ſubject, thoſe that faſten upon property are the worſt, and moſt liable to abuſe. They are not indeed levelled at the lives and liberties of the people; but the hands of the people are never tied up but with an intention to plunder them. Of the exceſſes, moreover, committed by the officers of the revenue, there is ſcarcely ever one that does not involve in it the crime of avarice. This then is the firſt object to which the ſovereign's eye ſhould be directed; it ſhould be his firſt care to eſtabliſh the collection of his taxes upon the cleareſt and moſt intelligible ſyſtem. While impoſts are multiplied, and the laws that eſtabliſh the taxation continue vague, complex, and uncertain, the adminiſtration of this whole department will ever be captious, fraudulent, and oppreſſive. Theſe laws, therefore, muſt be rendered as ſimple as poſſible; they muſt be penned with accuracy and preciſion; and the tax itſelf, that indiſpenſible

demand

demand of government, ſhould be equal, eaſy, and founded in the fitneſs of things: it ſhould be one general impoſt, though varied in its application to ſundry wiſe and good purpoſes; and, finally, it ſhould be uniform throughout the realm, like the tribute or tythe which Sicily paid with pleaſure to the Romans, or like that which was levied in Aſia, in proportion to the annual increaſe or loſs, and gained for Cæſar, the author of it, the affections of mankind. Were the finances thus regulated, fraud would not be able to intrench itſelf in the labyrinths of law, and the * abſurdity of edicts: but the right eſtabliſhed upon clear and ſimple principles, would carry the cleareſt evidence of truth along with it, and that truth would draw the line to circumſcribe the power of the officers. Thus the laws of taxation, by ceaſing to be arbitrary, would ceaſe to be deteſtable.'

'You are aware,' ſaid the emperor, 'of the reaſoning that encounters theſe principles: make taxation ſimple, and you reduce it at the ſame time.'—'I wiſh to do ſo,' replied Beliſarius.—'But,' reſumed Juſtinian,'if the people are left too much at eaſe, by a national conſequence they grow lazy, arrogant, rebellious, and untractable.'—'Gracious heaven!' exclaimed Beliſarius; 'will aſſuring to men the fruits of their labour give them an averſion from their induſtry? Will men become rebels, becauſe their happineſs is ſecured and promoted? But the fear is, that they will prove arrogant! Alas! I know that little tyrants would be glad to ſee them crouch like ſlaves under the maſter's laſh. But I would deſire to know, to whom ſhould the ſubject bend, while his conduct is free from reproach or guilt? There is no power on earth but that of the laws and of the legal ſovereign, to which an honeſt member of ſociety owes any deference. I would aſk, further, will uſurpation be as

* The emperor laid a duty upon urine, duſt, ordure, dead bodies, ſmoak, air, &c. There were rights of the turf, the highway, ſhorage, duties upon carriages, beaſts of burthen, &c. et quæ alia (ſays Tacitus) exactionibus illicities nomina publicani invenerunt. Buling. De tribut. ac vectig. P. R. ſure

ſure of having obedience paid to it, as will that mild authority which creates for itſelf a kind of a paternal empire over the hearts of men, by works of beneficence, and by generous deeds that call for gratitude, affection, and eſteem? Believe me, I know the character of the people: they are not what they are repreſented. Are they diſpirited, nay, diſaffected? It is owing to their grievances. Is their temper ſoured? and are they grown reluctant to command? It is becauſe they find themſelves for ever acquiring, and never ſure of poſſeſſing. In ſober ſadneſs this is the truth: but it is diſcoloured with art; deſigning men dogmatize on the ſubject, and they endeavour to give their falſehood the air and ſanction, of appearing ſyſtematical. The principle upon which they ground themſelves is, that the race of man lives in ſubſerviency to a very ſmall part of the ſpecies, and that the world was made for the uſe of themſelves and a few leading men.'—'It is an inconceivable pride,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'and yet a pride too common to the human mind.' —'Not ſo common as you imagine,' replied Beliſarius; 'we hear it indeed often, but it is from men who are acting a part; it is a ſort of paradox in politics that never had one ſincere believer. I will venture to ſay, there never yet exiſted a perſon of common ſenſe, however eminent in his ſtation, who, upon a comparative view of himſelf and the people, who ſupport, who nouriſh, and defend him, did not ſhrink back with humility into himſelf; for he feels his imbecility, his neceſſities, and his ſtate of dependence. His pride is a maſk; a mere aſſumed character; but the miſchief is, he is ſo practiſed in the character, that he has learned to play it well, and to impoſe upon his audience. May heaven preſerve your royal friend, my worthy Tiberius, from this fatal illuſion! That he may be effectually preſerved from it, direct his attention to the early periods and primitive condition of civil ſociety: he will then obſerve three claſſes of men, each ſubſiſting in a ſtate of reciprocal aid and dependence: the huſbandman, in the firſt place, employed in the cultivation of the earth for the ſupport of life; the artificer

artificer, ſecondly, whoſe occupation it was to give to the materials of the earth their relative forms and fitneſs for uſe; and thirdly, the ſtateſman or able politician, who conſecrated himſelf to the arts of government for the good order and well being of ſociety. In this federal union not one of the parties is uſeleſs or inactive: the advantage of mutual ſuccour is circulated in full exertion through all the members, according to the power of each; and thus bodily force, labour, and induſtry, intellectual ability, the faculties of the mind, ſuperior talents, and eminent virtues, all conſpire and act in concert for the general good. This order of things, ſimple, natural, and regular as it may appear, is the true analyſis of government: theſe are the original forms into which political œconomy muſt reſolve itſelf: theſe the firſt principles to which it is reducible.

You cannot but obſerve what an outrage it would be againſt all good ſenſe and order, if any one of theſe claſſes ſhould revolt againſt the others: you muſt ſee that they are all equally dependant, and equally conducive to each other; and that if a preference can be aſcribed to any one in particular, it muſt be to the huſbandman, inaſmuch as the ſupport of life is the firſt great principle and deſire of nature; the art, therefore, that nouriſhes man muſt be the firſt of arts. But as this art accompliſhes its end by methods eaſy and ſure! as it is expoſed to no danger, and acquires an exertion of the moſt common and ordinary powers, it is right that the more delicate arts, which demand talents, virtues, and the moſt refined acquirements, ſhould meet with the higheſt encouragement. For this reaſon, therefore, the arts that adminiſter to the firſt wants of life will not be held in the greateſt eſtimation, and indeed they do not aſpire to it. But inaſmuch as it would be impolitic, on the one hand, to over-rate them, ſo it would be unjuſt on the other, and repugnant to the intereſts of humanity, to degrade them into contempt.'

'Let your friend, my good Tiberius, be upon his guard againſt the approaches of this ſtupid diſdain: on

the contrary, it will behove him to cheriſh, as the nurſe of himſelf and of human kind, this too much deſpiſed, though excellent and beneficial branch of induſtry. It is juſt, in the arrangement of things, that the people ſhould labour for the two other claſſes of ſociety, which co-operate with them for the good of the whole, and contribute largely to the ſupport of that power which forms the defence of the community. The earth was ordained to ſupply the nurture of man, and to thoſe who increaſe its fertility the firſt maintenance is due: this is juſtice to the huſbandman: and the ſtate, in rating him to the charges of government, muſt be * careful to lay the tax upon his redundancies only. If the ſole recompenſe of hard and unremitting labour were no more than the mere privilege of leading an undeſirable and wretched life, the cultivators of the earth could no longer be deemed a part of the political aſſociation, but would remain in a ſtate of ſlavery: their condition would be intolerable; they would ruſh from their rank, turn order into anarchy, or elſe put a ſtop to the propagation of ſo many miſerable beings, and ſo annihilate the rank itſelf.'

'It muſt be allowed,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'that they are too much depreſſed: but happily little is wanting to that race of men, inured as they are to penury and labour! Beyond the excitement of appetite and the firſt wants of nature their ambition never ariſes; let them have bread, and they have content along with it.'

'To ſay the truth, my good neighbour,' replied Beliſarius, 'one would imagine that you had lived your days in courts, for you are maſter of the language. What you have now advanced rings for ever in the ear of a prince, that he may be the more readily induced to pillage his people, and that he may do it without remorſe. The people, it is true, have not the inordinate wants which luxury has created in the higher ranks of life, and therefore they are more likely to be reaſonable in their complaints and their demands. The more frugal and

* This was the maxim of Henry IV. of France; and of all good kings.

modeſt

modeſt their way of life, the more ſober and temperate their manners, the ſtronger is the preſumption that, when they remonſtrate their grievances, they do it with ſufficient provocation. In the court dictionary, to want the neceſſaries of life implies the want of ability to maintain twenty uſeleſs horſes, and as many idle drones in livery: in the honeſt meaning of the ſimple huſbandman, it is to want wherewithal to nouriſh a poor old father bending under years and infirmities, to rear a little race of infants whoſe feeble arms are yet unfit for work, and to comfort a virtuous wife who is either breeding or nurſing a new ſubject of the ſtate; it is, in plain rural language, to want theſe things, and to want, beſides, the proper ſeeds to depoſit in the ground, a well-ſtored granary againſt an hard ſeaſon in a year of ſcarcity, and in age and in ſickneſs the comforts and the ſuccours which weary nature has occaſion for. Oh! my friends, is it not manifeſt that the fruits of agriculture are deſtined in the firſt place, and of juſtice due, to thoſe who labour to make the earth more productive? The deſtination is holy, and ſhould be kept more ſacred and inviolable than all the treaſure in the depoſitories of Janus.'

'Alas!' ſaid the emperor, 'they are times of public calamity, when government may exert a diſpenſing power, and ſtate-neceſſity is then the law which impoſes new burthens and taxes on the people.'

'It ſhould be a caſe of the laſt extremity indeed,' replied Beliſarius; 'every ſuperfluity ſhould be firſt brought into the common ſtock, all reſources ſhould be exhauſted, and no way left of ſaving the ſtate but by the ruin of the people. That ſtate-neceſſity I am a ſtranger to: the occaſion for that diſpenſing power I have never ſeen*. But to repreſent things in their true point of light; do you know where the miſchif lies that makes the honeſt

* Marcus Aurelius, in a preſſing exigence, rather than overload the people with new taxes, ſold the furniture of the imperial palace. Vaſa aurea, uxorium ac ſuam ſericum et auream veſtum multa ormenta gemmarum; ac per duos menſes venditio habita eſt. Aurel. Vict.

huſbandman

husbandman groan in misery? It rests with that superior class, as it is called, who pass away the hours in idleness and riot: by them the whole burthen is thrown upon honest industry. They reap almost all the advantages of the civil union, and yet contribute the least to its support; they do nothing for the strength and dignity of the government which gives them so much ease and enjoyment; they repay nothing for the benefits they receive, and yet in their case it seems a privileged, an honourable insolvency. Let this abuse be altogether reformed: let the necessary charge of government fall in just proportions upon every member of the community; let it be diffused through all orders of men, according to the means and abilities of each, and the burthen will then be light and equitable.'

'What has not been attempted,' said the emperor, 'in order to establish this just equality so much desired? Have not the Decurions, who were base enough, in the assessment of the cities committed to them, to over-rate some in order to give undue exceptions to others, been adjudged by the law to be burnt alive?'

'Alas!' replied Belisarius, 'I know that little favour is shewn to those unhappy wretches. For not sufficiently grinding the face of the poor they are laid in irons, unmercifully scourged and buffeted, and persecuted, under the name of justice, with every barbarity, till they envy even the lot of slaves. But for the regents of provinces, for pro-consuls, and other ministers, are there rods and dungeons ready? and supposing there were, of what use are pains and penalties, while the mouth of complaint is stopped, and the cries of misery are suffocated? Let laws abate of their severity, so they have a free course, and injured men are permitted to prosecute their legal remedy.'

'The liberty to complain of grievances,' said Justinian, 'has been the right of the people in all periods.'

'It has so,' replied Belisarius, 'it is a constitutional right, but the exercise of it has depended upon the will and pleasure of subordinate tyrants. Have not attempts been made to attach the persons of president and prefects,

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that cities and provinces might be at liberty to appeal to the court for a redreſs of injuries, in which thoſe very men were either principals or accomplices? And could any method be taken more ſure of procuring impunity for the offenders? The law directs its miniſters to prevent violence and exactions; and thoſe very miniſters are the parties accuſed. The law impoſes a religious duty upon the governors of provinces, to protect the weak from the oppreſſions of the ſtronger; and thoſe very governors have at once the means of oppreſſing, and even the power of doing it, under the ſanction of that very law which forbids them. The law defines the groſs ſum of the tax; but preſidents and pro-conſuls make the aſſeſſment upon individuals, and they never want ſophiſtry to give a colour to the exactions. The law gives a right of citing the tools and little inſtruments of the governor before the governor himſelf; but from his tribunal there lies no appeal to the ſovereign, and this, we are told, is grounded upon a maxim that the prince raiſes none to that high ſtation but men of approved wiſdom and uprightneſs, who can do no wrong. But cannot the prince be deceived in his choice? To truſt the welfare of a whole people to the promiſed faith of one man is a monſtrous abſurdity in government. Juſtinian was aware of this, and to reform the abuſe re-eſtabliſhed the prætorſhip, with full powers and inſtructions to inquire into the conduct and depredations of the governors. But, in doing this, he created a new order of tyrants, whoſe reſidence in the provinces gave an opportunity to corruption to ſpread as it were by contagion, till they, who were meant to be the guardians of the people, became confederates in profligacy, and increaſed the number of vile uſurpers. Hence the impunity with which vice lords it through the empire; hence too, the ſhameful imbecility of relaxed and ineffectual laws.'

'What would you do in ſuch a caſe,' ſaid the emperor? 'I would liſten,' replied Beliſarius, 'to the outcries of the injured, and proud oppreſſion ſhould tremble for its guilt.

'There is, among the various inſtitutions eſtabliſhed by

by the princes of the empire, one that I reverence, and fervently wiſh to ſee enforced according to the true principles and ſpirit of its deſign. When in the number of perſons, to whom the authority of government is delegated, I perceived a ſet of officers ſent into the provinces* with ſpecial powers to hear the complaints of the people, in order to tranſmit a memorial of grievances to the emperor, I felt my heart expand with the ſpirit of humanity. My vows are offered up, my conſtant prayers, that the prince may give that important office all its weight and dignity; that he may nominate to ſo glorious an employment his ſelect and moſt virtuous friends, the men of approved integrity and honour; that amidſt the awful pomp of religious ceremony he may receive, at the foot of the altar, the ſolemn oath, by which the choſen patriots ſhall bind themſelves to their prince, their country, and their God, never to betray the intereſts of the weak and helpleſs to the pride and arrogance of domineering ſpirits; that he may each year depute his honeſt band as the guardians of our civil rights; and that he may, as ſoon as their high commiſſion is executed, recal them to his preſence, leſt corruption have time to tamper with their virtue. Were things in this train, what glorious effects might be expected from ſuch a viſitation? The conſequences are now before my eyes! Behold, on the arrival of the juſt and upright man, how liberty rears its head in the provinces, and ſmiles content! how tyranny and oppreſſion look abaſhed and tremble! Behold the governors, the pro-conſuls, and their deputies turn pale and ſhrink at the tribunal of their judge, who is ſurrounded by a grateful aſſembly of the people, and hailed as their father and their avenger! It is the complaint of kings that the truth does not reach them! But oh, my friends! ſhe endeavours to make her way to them, and even breaks through their guards, in defiance of ſwords and peril. Yet how eaſy might the acceſs be made! It would not then be the ſeditious outcry of a tumultuous people, but the calm remonſtrance of the wiſe and good offering up, with reſpectful deference, at the foot of the

* They were called CURIOSI.

throne,

throne, the ſupplications of humanity. How rare would be the flagrant outrages committed in the very name of the ſovereign, if thus annually they were to undergo a ſevere and ſtrict examination, while the ſword of juſtice is ready in the ſovereign's hand to fall on every guilty head!

'Of all ranks in ſociety, the military claſs is that where licentiouſneſs and diſorder are likely to prevail with impunity. But let diſcipline be enforced with due rigour throughout the army; let partiality never glide into the adminiſtration of juſtice; and a few examples, ſuch as Juſtinian has held forth to the world, will controul the wildeſt and moſt daring ſpirits.'

'To what example do you allude,' ſaid the emperor? 'You ſhall hear,' replied Beliſarius: 'it is, in my judgment, the brighteſt paſſage of his reign. The generals who commanded at Colchis had imbrued their hands in royal blood. The king of the Lazians, even then in alliance with the emperor, was inhumanly murdered. Without delay Juſtinian ſent Athanaſius, one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſenators, with inſtructions and full power to hold an inquiry into the conduct of the delinquents, and after a full hearing to pronounce judgment, and ſee the ſentence of the law executed on the guilty. Athanaſius, who was now judge in the laſt reſort, conducted this important buſineſs with all the pomp and ſolemnity the occaſion required. On one of the ſmaller hills of Caucaſus he fixed his tribunal, and there, in the ſight of the Lazian army, the murderers of the king were beheaded.—But commiſſions of this nature called for men ſuperior to corruption, of which, indeed, the number is miſerably thinned by the weak and proſtrate condition of the ſenate.'

'How!' ſaid Tiberius, 'are you a zealot for that deſpotic order, thoſe enemies of civil liberty, men of boundleſs arrogance in power, ſubmiſſive to uſurpation, and leſs ready to enſlave or be enſlaved?'

'When I bemoan the want of a ſenate,' replied Beliſarius, 'I do not regret what it was; I regret what it might have been. There is in every government a tendency to arbitrary power; for it is perhaps natural to

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man to ſet up his own will as a law to others. By their rigid behaviour, their inflexible pride, and domineering arrogance, the ſenate made their adminiſtration odious; and mankind, haraſſed out, began to conceive hopes that the government of one might prove more mild and equitable; they preferred it, therefore, to the tyranny of the few. The ſovereign, thus eſtabliſhed, grew jealouſly fond of the ſole authority, and upon the ruins of the ſenate he has determined to build up his prerogative. As he had advanced in his encroachment, a panic ſeized the ſenate, and the whole order crouched at once with a meanneſs that exceeded even the wiſhes of the new maſter; even Tiberius bluſhed for their ſervility: but it is eaſy to conceive, that the ſenate, when it loſt the power of doing evil, might ſtill retain that of rendering ſervice to the public; that it might give to government an air of conſtitutional authority; and being an intermediate order between the ſovereign and the people, might connect and ſtrengthen the whole force of the community.—And yet it is not in this view that I regard the ſenate. I conſider it as a ſeminary of ſtateſmen and of heroes, where at all times might be found a ſet of great and eminent characters, uſed alike to the ſword and to the ſcales of juſtice, diſtinguiſhed both in council and in the field, and fully inſtructed how to give ſupport to government, by ſalutary laws and military force. It is from that nurſery of men, all trained to truth, to knowledge, and to virtue, that the ſovereign would be always able to ſelect his miniſters, his generals, his governors, and his officers of every ſort. Let there be occaſion now for a man of principle, wiſdom, and ability; where is he to be found? How is he to be known? Where has he diſtinguiſhed himſelf? Muſt the fate of a whole people be riſked before he can have a decided character? Can a Regulus, a Fabius, or a Scipio, be formed by the new inſtitution of an imperial militia to do duty about the palace?* Inſtead of a public career of emulation, where

* This new-fangled order conſiſted of the civil magiſtrate and the officers of the revenue. The ſenate was merged in it by policy of the emperors.

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the ſoldiery is inured to the exerciſe of arms, where talents enter the liſts, where virtue is called forth into open day-light, where the characters of men diſplay themſelves to the world, and the powers of genius are unfolded, and abilities preſs forward in the race of glory; inſtead of this bright ſchool of honour, all generous contention is ſuppreſſed, and employments of dignity, that ſhould be the reward of merit only, are now given as a compliment to the accidental circumſtances of birth, or partially dealt out by the hand of court favour. From this ſource ſpring all the evils, which, like a torrent, threaten to overwhelm the ſtate.'

'What would you adviſe,' ſaid the emperor? 'When men have degenerated into vice and profligacy; when the whole race is degraded, and, after painful endeavours to appoint for the beſt, nothing great or good can be ſeparated from the general maſs of the times; judgment then may be weary of deliberating, and he who finds that he chooſes only to err, may reaſonably deſire to wave the fatigue of thinking to no purpoſe.'

'That is concluding too haſtily,' replied Beliſarius; 'though often baffled in the choice, yet the ſovereign ſhould not be diſcouraged. Total depravity never happens; honeſt men are always to be found; and if not found, they are to be made. They will be made, if the love of virtue, and penetration to diſtinguiſh it, form the character of the prince. Farewel, my friends, the topic I have juſt ſtarted ſhall be diſcuſſed at our next meeting; and it will be no unpleaſing inquiry, if we find, as I think we ſhall, to reform the worſt abuſes depends upon the volition of a ſingle man.'

'Beliſarius ſeems to reſt every thing upon the weak irreſolute will of the prince,' ſaid Juſtinian to Tiberius: 'but can a mere act of the will beſtow diſcernment, or aſcertain a proper choice? Is he not aware of the falſe appearances under which men diſguiſe themſelves?'— 'That men will be born ſuch as you chooſe they ſhould,' ſaid Tiberius, 'as if nature were ſubject to political authority, is a propoſition that embarraſſes me much. Yet

Beliſarius has a large and comprehenſive mind: his years and his misfortunes have opened to him many veins of reflection; and it will be well worth while to liſten to him.'

CHAP. XIII.

ON their arrival the following day, they found Beliſarius employed with his man Paulinus in the cultivation of his garden. 'Had you arrived,' ſaid he, 'a moment ſooner, you would have learnt, as I myſelf have done, an excellent leſſon in the art of governing; for nothing bears ſo ſtrong a reſemblance to political œconomy as the management of plants; and my gardener, who is here at hand, reaſons upon the matter like another Solon.'

As the emperor and Tiberius were walking a turn with the hero, the young man ſtated to him the ſeveral reflections they had made, together with the reaſons upon with they founded an opinion that he was wrong in his laſt propoſition.

'It is too true,' replied Beliſarius, 'that a prince, ſurrounded in his palace by a circle of courtiers and of flatterers, will have but little knowledge of mankind; but what ſhall reſtrain him from breaking through the fence, from being communicative and eaſy of acceſs? Affability in a ſovereign is an inquiry into that truth, which will be diſguiſed by his ſlaves, but never withheld from him by the friend of the people, the honeſt huſbandman, and the rough veteran ſoldier. From them he will hear the voice of the public; that voice which is the oracle kings ought to conſult; the beſt, the unerring decider of merit and of virtue! Let that oracle pronounce what men are fit for ſervants of the ſtate, and an erroneous choice will ſeldom be made. To ſay the whole in a few words, the ſovereign's attention ought to be directed only to two objects, which are, the counſellors of ſtate, and the men who are to carry the plans of the cabinet into execution: if the former are fit for their high office, I will be reſponſible for the latter. The whole depends upon having near his perſon men worthy of their ſtation. Theodoric had

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but one faithful adviſer, the virtuous Caſſiodorus, and the glory of his reign is known to the univerſe. I will take upon me to ſay, that even at court there are not wanting infallible criterions of honour and fidelity. Severity of manners, diſintereſted conduct, the honeſt firmneſs of truth, a generous ardour in the cauſe of innocence unſhaken conſtancy in friendſhip, a zeal for virtue that never veers about with the gales of fortune, and a reverence for the laws; theſe are the features of character by which a prince may know how to diſtinguiſh among men, and to determine his choice. Would you know the tokens which ſhould make him proſcribe men from his preſence? They are more legible and certain than the former; for virtue may be counterfeit, but the character of vice is ſeldom acted. As ſoon as it appears, you may believe it genuine. For example, if I were a king, the man who once ſhould dare to talk with contempt of my people, with levity of the duties of my ſtation, or ſhould attempt to varniſh with flattery the abuſe of my prerogative, that man ſhould never rank in the liſt of my friends. Moreover, to an obſervant eye that marks the ways of the world, there are never wanting certain traces of character, which, through the veil of diſſimulation, betray the habitual ſentiment, and develope the inward man. I have heard much of the profound impoſture of courtiers: but impoſture is as well known as candour itſelf; and ſhould the ſovereign be impoſed upon, the public voice will undeceive him. Let him therefore give his eſteem and confidence to the worthy, and he will be ſure to be properly informed in every deliberation: for truth and virtue will then ſit at his council-board.'

'But do you conſider,' ſaid the emperor, 'what a number of the good and virtuous he will have occaſion for, that the free courſe of juſtice and the dignity of his reign may be ſupported in their vigour? Where is he to find the men to complete ſo honourable a liſt?'

'Human nature,' replied Beliſarius, 'will always ſupply him. Let ſovereigns know how to uſe them, and ſhe will never be defective.'—'And to direct that uſe,' ſaid

Juſtinian, 'can there be a better rule than that of wholeſome and ſalutary laws?'—'That will go a great way,' replied Beliſarius; 'but it is not all: the manners are not in many inſtances, within the control of law.'

'And how then,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'are inveterate habits, to which time has given a kind of preſcription, to be effectually changed?'

'My gardener will inform you,' replied Beliſarius. 'Here, Paulinus: When a noxious herb ſhoots up among your plants, what do you do?—'I take it up by the root,' anſwered the honeſt gardener:—'But why, inſtead of weeding it don't you lop it?'—'Why, it would ſprout again, and there would be no end of the trouble: and beſides, good ſir, it is at the root it ſucks in the juice of the earth, and that is our buſineſs to prevent.'—'You hear him, my friends,' ſaid Beliſarius; 'he has given you an abridgment of the law. The law, it is true, retrenches, as far as it is able, the crimes of ſociety; but the vices that give birth to thoſe crimes are ſuffered to remain, whereas they ought to be weeded and torn up by the root. Nor is that an impracticable ſcheme: for all vices, at leaſt thoſe of the court, have one common root, and grow out of the ſame ſeed.'—'And what is that, pray?' ſaid Tiberius.—'Inordinate deſire,' replied Beliſarius: 'and whether that deſire be underſtood to import avarice that loves to hoard, or rapacity that delights in ſquandering, there is nothing ſordid and unworthy but what ſprings from that ſource. Inhumanity, fraud, treachery, ingratitude, envy, malice, and all the vices that make the gradation to the higheſt iniquity, are modes of the ſame depravity of heart, that breaks out in every ſpecies of meanneſs and of pride. It goes on in a courſe of depredation upon mankind, and with the ſpoils of the weak pampers itſelf in riot, voluptuous enjoyment, and every ſort of profligacy and corruption. Thus the love of riches infects the whole ſyſtem of the manners. Does it kindle ambition? Perfidy and fraud are mingled with what otherwiſe might be a nobler paſſion. Is courage ever grafted upon covetouſneſs? From the ſtock on which it grows

grows, even courage ſhall derive the pernicious qualities that debaſe it into a vice. The moſt brilliant talents are by avarice tinged with the ſtain of venality; and the ſoul, which is enſlaved by it, is for ever ſet up to auction, to be bought by the higheſt bidder.

'From this ſource, this fatal deſire of amaſſing wealth, ſpring all the crimes that diſturb the community. Of this vice, whoſe tyranny afflicts the univerſe, luxury is the parent; for, to make its genealogy clear, luxury engenders various wants; by theſe avarice is begot; and avarice, to gratify her purpoſes, is obliged to league with oppreſſion. From hence it is clear that, to lay the ax to the root of the miſchief, we muſt begin with luxury: there muſt commence the grand revolution in the manners.'

'But that,' ſaid the emperor, 'will be to wage war with an hydra; one head is ſtruck off, and thouſands grow in its room. To uſe a compariſon more analogous; luxury is a Proteus, which is never to be chained, but eludes the touch in different ſhapes. I will go further,' ſaid the emperor: 'the cauſes and the effects of luxury, its connexions and its intereſt, form a ſyſtem ſo compounded of good and evil, that, were it poſſible to reſtrain or deſtroy it, I ſhould much doubt whether the former would be endured, or the latter prove in the end an advantage to the ſtate.'

'I grant you,' replied Beliſarius, 'that luxury in the ſtate is like a ſet of wicked and evil men, who have entrenched themſelves in great connexions: meaſures are kept with them in the beginning, on account of their party; but in the end they are ordered into confinement, as enemies of the ſtate. I ſhall not, however, go ſo far. Let us ſet out with facts which I myſelf have ſeen. Luxury, it has been ſaid, is of uſe in capital cities. I do not believe the poſition; but, be that as it may, in a camp I am ſure it is pernicious. When Pompey obſerved the ſoldiers of Cæſar living upon roots that grew wildly in the fields, "*They are*," ſaid he, "*an herd of brute beaſts*:" he ſhould have ſaid, "*They are men.*" The primary

quality of a general is to hazard his life; the ſecond, to circumſcribe his paſſions and his wants within the bounds of reaſon and of nature; and this laſt, to the man enervated by voluptuous indolence, will be a taſk of the moſt difficult ſelf-denial. The people that ſhall endeavour, amidſt the rough ſcenes of war, to enjoy the ſofter delicacies of peace, will ſtrive to reconcile two things wholly incompatible, and will neither be able to bear proſperity nor the reverſes of fortune. To be victorious will not anſwer their purpoſe; they muſt riot in abundance; and ſhould that happen not to be the conſequence, even victory will loſe its charms. The camp, where frugality and ſober manners prevail, will be full of ſpirit and manly vigour; it will be, as I may ſay, on the wing; while the army, which is diſſolved in luxury, grows ſluggiſh, daſtardly, and inactive. By temperance all the advantages of inward ſtrength and outward reſource are managed and ſecured; and, on the other hand, they are all thrown away by prodigality, till at length deſolation, famine, pale diſmay, and ſhameful flight, conclude the war with infamy and diſgrace. To the people ſoftened by effeminacy, every enterpriſe appears above their ſtrength: the principle of valour may remain, but the power of executing is gone; and the enemy that knows how to haraſs and fatigue, need not endeavour to vanquiſh; the delays of war will have the efficacy of ſo many battles.

'Nor does the whole miſchief of luxury conſiſt in waſting the vigour of the body; it ſtrikes corruption to the very ſoul. The man of wealth and affluence, who leads pleaſure and luxury in his train, diffuſes a contagion through the camp; and the ſoldier of fortune, aſhamed to be outdone by his equal in the army, becomes his competitor in profligacy, and for a ſhew of vain glory incurs real diſhonour. To riches and ſplendour of appearance, eſteem is offered up as a tribute, while poverty falls into contempt, and ſober virtue is abaſhed by ridicule: then farewel to all; there can be no deeper perdition. This, my friends, is not a fictitious account of luxury: it is the hiſtory of what I have ſeen.' 'I know

'I know full well,' ſaid Tiberius, 'that you baniſhed it from your armies; pray inform me how was that accompliſhed?'—'Without any kind of difficulty,' replied Beliſarius: 'I caſhiered it from my own tent, and made it appear throughout the ranks in a contemptible light. Againſt the venom of pride contempt is a powerful antidote! I had learned that a young Aſiatic had uſhered into my camp the ſoft indulgences of his native clime; that he repoſed himſelf under a purple pavilion, and drank out of golden goblets; that his table ſmoked with the rareſt diſhes, and ſparkled with the moſt exquiſite wines. I invited him to dine with me, and in the preſence of his comrades.—"Youug man," ſaid I, "you ſee we live here upon homely fare; we are often worſe ſerved, and it is what we have to expect; for in the race of glory it is our lot very often to want bread. Your delicacy, take my word for it, will meet frequent diſappointments in this hardy courſe of life, and therefore I would adviſe you to take your leave of the army." He received his reproach with true ſenſibility, made an apology for his conduct, and diſcharged this retinue.'—'And was that admonition ſufficient?' interpoſed Tiberius.—'Without doubt it was,' replied Beliſarius; 'for my own example gave weight to my precepts; and, beſides, the character of irreſolution never belonged to me.'—'But ſurely this ſeverity of life muſt have occaſioned great complaints!'—'When the law is equal and expedient, it is obeyed without murmuring.'—'Very true; but to be humbled to the level of the poor muſt have been an hardſhip upon the rich man.'—'That may poſſibly be the caſe; but to counterbalance that inconvenience, it was agreeable to the poor man to ſee the rich undiſtinguiſhed; and the poor in all quarters of the world are the the greateſt party.'—'Yes; but in courts the rich have the ſtrongeſt influence.'—'They have ſo, and they revenged themſelves by my ruin: and yet, far from repenting, I ſhould act in the ſame manner again; for the vigour of the ſoul, like that of the body, is the reſult of temperance. Without temperance there is nothing generous and diſintereſted;

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and without diſintereſtedneſs, not a ſingle virtue. I inquired of a ſhepherd one day, why his dogs were ſo faithful? "Becauſe," ſaid he, "they live on bread. Had they been nouriſhed with fleſh, they would be no better than wolves." I was much ſtruck with this reply. In general, the ſureſt way to control the progreſs of vice is to retrench the wants occaſioned by evil habits.'—'All this is practicable in an army,' ſaid the emperor, 'but merely viſionary, nay, impoſſible in a ſtate. Between civil inſtitutions and military law there is a wide difference: by the latter liberty is much abridged, and fettered with ſtrict limitations. No law whatever reſtrains a member of ſociety from enriching himſelf by fair and honeſt means; and when wealth is acquired, no law can diveſt him of the right of diſpoſing of it, or prevent a quiet enjoyment of his property. It is the fruit of his induſtry, his labour, and his talents, or it was tranſmitted to him by his anceſtors. He is at liberty to diſſipate, or to gratify his avarice by concealing his treaſure.'—'I ſubſcribe to what you ſay,' ſaid Beliſarius.—'I go ſtill further,' continued the emperor: 'if the riches of the community are engroſſed by a particular claſs of men, it is fit that they ſhould be diffuſed, and that labour and induſtry ſhould derive their ſhare from the hand of idleneſs.'—'I concur with you in that alſo,' ſaid the hero.—'I will add.' reſumed Juſtinian, 'that ſenſuality, oſtentation, ſplendour of appearance, the caprices of taſte, the coquetry of faſhion, the refinements of effeminacy, and the whims of vanity, are all little blemiſhes in the manners, which the policy of every ſtate connives at, and of which, without a degree of tyranny, no law can take cognizance.'—'Heaven forbid,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'that I ſhould deſire to bring down the weight of law upon matters of this ſort!'—'Now then you ſee,' continued the emperor, 'that luxury ſtands protected by all that is held ſacred and inviolable amongſt men, by liberty, by the rights of property, and, I may add, public utility.'—'I agree to all,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'except that laſt point.'—'To clear that from objections,' ſaid the prince, 'you will allow

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that luxury animates the arts, and bids them thrive and flouriſh; that it encourages induſtry, and excites a ſpirit of activity and emulation, offering to the habit of indolence and the love of idleneſs new incentives of deſire, artificial want, and ſtudied gratifications.'

'I allow,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'that luxury, for thoſe who have been addicted to it, has its allurements, and that it is profitable to men who ſtudy to heighten thoſe allurements and gratify deſire: that the law ſhould leave that commerce free and open I likewiſe admit. Is not this what you contend for?'

'I contend for ſomething further,' replied the emperor: 'I maintain, that the influence of luxury, by progreſſive degrees, diffuſes itſelf through every claſs of the community, even down to thoſe who work and labour. It is beneficial to them, for it opens a vent for their commodities, and yields a quick return for their induſtry.'

'It is upon this point,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'that appearances miſlead you; for that which comes to the ſhare of the labouring man from the hand of prodigality, only reverts back to the original owner: it was firſt taken from him by avarice; and if it return to him, it is becauſe luxury cannot prevent it. Recal to mind the idea which I formerly ſuggeſted, of the primitive ſtate of ſociety: what is the end it has in view? Is it not to render man uſeful to man? And in that ſyſtem, is not the right which one man has to the labours of another founded on reciprocal conditions? If ſo, what muſt be ſaid of him who employs thouſands to anſwer the multiplicity of his wants, without contributing on his part to the ſervice of others? He is like a ſterile and pernicious herb that grows to ſeed in a field of wheat. Such is the rich man who loiters his days in idleneſs and luxury. For him the buſy part of the ſociety are at work; and with a cold diſregard he receives the products of their labour as a tribute due to him. To ſupply his deſire, and adminiſter to his pleaſures, ſeems the employment of all nature; the elements, the moſt exquiſite viands, the arts and the choiceſt efforts of invention, are all his.

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He partakes of all, and is unconducive himſelf to any uſeful end; he engroſſes from the public ſervice a number of hands for his own purpoſes; he does the duty of none, and dies at laſt without leaving any void, but that of the good things he has conſumed.'

'I am not clear as to this point,' ſaid Tiberius; 'for it ſeems to me that he is not altogether ſo great an incumbrance as you imagine. For if he does not throw the fruits of his own talents into the general fund; if he does not impart to the public his own activity and powers; yet he circulates his money, and that does full as well.'

'Hold, my young friend,' ſaid Beliſarius; 'money is a mere ſymbol of valuation, a general ſtandard, denoting the worth of the thing we receive, and a pledge for the return of it. It anſwers the purpoſes of mutual commerce, and gives facility to the traffic between man and man: but he who, in the courſe of that traffic, gives only the ſymbol, and never parts with the reality, breaks the true law of commutation, in order to poſſeſs himſelf of that for which he never pays in kind. The pawn which he depoſits diſpenſes with the contract, inſtead of binding it cloſer. Let the magiſtrate keep painful vigils for the public ſafety; let the ſoldier fight the battles of his country; and let the huſbandman and artificers work inceſſantly; the right of the rich man to their joint ſervices is annually renewed, and his privilege to be inſignificant is ſtamped upon his gold.'

'In this manner,' ſaid Tiberius, 'the world is hired in the ſervice of opulence.'—'It is ſo, my young friend,' continued Beliſarius; 'and the rich man is at no other trouble than that of paying in the detail to the whole community the wages of their ſervitude.'—'But ſhould there be ſuch a ſtate of ſervitude?' inquired Tiberius.—'Why ſhould any government endure theſe men of overgrown opulence?'—'Becauſe,' replied the hero, 'the law ſecures to every individual the poſſeſſion of the property he has acquired, and nothing can be ſo juſtly acquired as the fruit of labour, induſtry, and knowledge. With the liberty

liberty of acquiring the right of poſſeſſing is naturally connected; and property, as well as liberty, is a civil right not to be violated.* It is, without doubt, an evil, that the opulent ſhould have it in their power to throw the whole load of their own exiſtence, and that of their train, upon the community; but it would be a more crying evil were the principles of emulation ſuppreſſed, and diveſted of a ſecure title to its poſſeſſions. Let us therefore not complain of incurable evils. As long as there are degrees of activity, induſtry, and œconomy, there will be degrees of happineſs and inequality in the conditions of mankind. The more flouriſhing the ſtate, the more ſtriking will that inequality be; and yet to level thoſe conditions, is a power that no legiſlature will uſurp.'

'Let us avow then,' ſaid the emperor, 'that luxury has its uſe; for it tends, by its wants and its expences, to command with the public for the very inequality complained of. In other words, luxury exhauſts its own riches, and bids them flow among the people.'—'I acknowledge it,' replied Beliſarius, 'riches ſhould have as many vents as poſſible through which to diffuſe themſelves abroad. I do not mean to argue, that the man of affluence ſhould be obliged to hoard his riches, or that any rule of policy ſhould preſcribe the uſe to be made of them. The law, I have already ſaid, ſhould content itſelf with charging the public with the neceſſities of government: farther than this it ſhould not go; the reſt of every man's acquiſition ſhould be left unexerciſed, in ſuch a manner, that the ſtate ſhould draw its neceſſary ſupplies from the ſuperfluity of its ſubjects. Opinion will do the reſt.'—'Opinion!' ſaid the emperor.—'Yes, opinion,' replied Beliſarius: 'that, and that only, without conſtraint and violence, will arrange all things in their proper order;

* A philoſopher at Athens found a treaſure that had been hid in his ground. He wrote to the emperor Trajan, '*I have found a treaſure.*' Trajan anſwered, that he had nothing to do but to enjoy it. '*It is too much for a philoſopher to uſe*,' replied the other. 'Then make a wrong uſe of it,' ſaid the prince. Alexander Severus thought the ſame.

and

and it is thence alone that we are to expect a revolution in the manners.'

'A revolution of this sort appears difficult to you; but it depends entirely upon the will and the example of the sovereign. Let him be equal and impartial to merit; let the man of modest reserve and simplicity of manners be sure of the best reception at court; let the prince proclaim his contempt of ostentatious expence and emaculating luxuries; let him behold with an eye of disdain the slaves of luxury; let him view with regards of cheerfulness and respect the men who labour for the public good, and the court will soon take the tone of simple manner, ennobled by wisdom and frugality. Ostentation will no longer be honourable, it will not even be decent. A becoming austerity of life will take the place of licentiousness; every thing frivolous will give way to wisdom; personal merit will be the best letter of recommendation, and pomp and vanity will be left the empty pleasures of self-applause. Oh, my friends! how rapid would be their fall! You know how docile and imitative the metropolis is; how easy to be moulded to the example of the court! That which grows into esteem is soon in fashion. The good old frugality once restored, disinterestedness would follow, and bring in her train heroic manners. The man of ability to be useful, perceiving inordinate desires no longer in vogue, and freed from debasing wants of luxury, would soon find the sentiments of honour taking root in his heart; the love of his country, and an ardour for glory, would warm the breast of freedom, and emulation would kindle up its generous flame. Alas! did the sovereign know his ascendant over the minds of men, with what facility he can mould them to his will, he would enjoy it as his sweetest power, his best and most respectable prerogative; and yet it is the only regal attribute of which he is entirely ignorant.

'By what influence,' said Justinan, 'shall the sovereign be able to control a taste for amusement, the love of pleasure, and the lust of money? Of what consequence is it to him, whose every sense is intoxicated with voluptuousness,

luptuouſneſs, whether the court approves or cenſures his conduct? Will the prince be able to reſtrain the man whoſe power of wealth is great, from making his own uſe of the induſtrious? Can he hinder him from being encompaſſed with delight? from making the arts ſubſervient to his gratifications?'—'No,' replied Beliſarius: 'but if it be agreeable to the ſovereign, he can brand effeminacy with ſhame, and indolence with contempt: he can exclude diſſipation, vice, and incapacity, however wealthy, from the firſt offices of the ſtate. It will depend upon him to make the true comforts of life, and every rational enjoyment, the ſure attendants of a good and reſpectable character: he can give them to merit, and he can moreover take from luxury all its pride and oſtentation, till it feels itſelf the object of contempt. This will almoſt complete the work: for when luxury is thus reduced, honeſty will no longer be depreſſed, nor will virtue ſuffer indignity. There will be other rewards, of which riches can never be the ſubſtitute. The eſteem of the public, dignities, and honours, will be the price of merit. Gold will not be able to cover over ſhame and infamy, and the little ſpirit will flutter in vain in pomp and ſplendid ornament. Believe me, my good friends, take pride from luxury, and you diſarm it. All its refined ſenſations are affected; it ſubſiſts entirely upon the opinion mankind entertains of its gaiety and happineſs. Subdue that opinion, and you reduce riches to their true ſtandard. If they aſpire to honour and real value, they muſt be ennobled by the uſe made of them. It is impoſſible for luxury to be generous; avarice grows upon its wants; and that very avarice is compounded of all the paſſions that are uſually hired for ceremony. But if the moſt ardent paſſions, ſuch as pride, ambition, and love itſelf, (for love always is in the train of pomp and vain glory) are no longer attached to magnificence and oſtentation, you may then compute how the eſtimate of luxury is diminiſhed, and avarice loſes of its force.

'The real advantages of wealth, ſuch as convenience, accommodation, the delights of affluence, quiet indepen-

dence, and that ſuperiority which fortune claims over thoſe who are retained in its ſervice: all theſe are more than ſufficient to ſtrike a deep impreſſion upon little minds; inſomuch that I am far from hoping or fearing the downfal of arts which have luxury for their ſupport.

'But let diſtinctions and honours be once disjoined from wealth, and thence the ſouls which nature has endowed with energy and ſpirit, with exalted virtues and generous paſſions, will look down with diſdain upon the petty enjoyments of vanity, and will ſeek elſewhere the rewards of fame and honour.'

'The glare of affluence,' ſaid Tiberius, 'will never be eclipſed in an opulent and flouriſhing ſtate by the frugal ſyſtem of barren and unprofitable honours. The eyes of mankind are dazzled by the luſtre of wealth; and dignities, nay majeſty itſelf, are obliged to borrow thence their moſt ſtriking decorations.'

'I ſhould be glad to know,' replied Beliſarius, 'of two eminent men, which, according to your ideas, gave the greateſt dignity, and even majeſty, to the Roman ſenate, the rich Lucullus or the indigent Cato?'—The queſtion quite overpowered Tiberius.—'I allude now,' continued the hero, 'to an æra of luxury; and yet in that very period, with what veneration did the ſound uncorrupted part of the common-wealth (I mean the people) recal in their minds the days of ancient ſimplicity, when Rome was free, virtuous, and poor; when the land of her ſcanty territory was tilled by the conqueror's hand, and the plough was crowned with triumphant laurel? Let us do juſtice to the people, and reſt aſſured, that a wiſe ſovereign, incircled with warriors and with patriots void of arrogance, but full of years and honours, will exhibit to his people a more reſpectable and honourable ſcene than a prince diſſolved in luxury and ſurrounded by a train of glittering vaſſals. It is a maxim ever inculcated by perſons in high offices, that to ſtrike the public with ideas of dignity, their rank ought never to be adorned with pomp and magnificence. They are generally

generally both ſuperinduced; but they reſemble a coat, whoſe amplitude ſerves to cover the defects of the body; and this furniſhes us with an additional reaſon why the whole wardrobe of outward ſhew and ſplendour, which thus diſguiſes men and confounds the judgment, ſhould be totally thrown aſide. When virtue diſplays itſelf to the public eye, like a wreſtle in the amphitheatre, her form and vigour will be better diſtinguiſhed; and if vice, incapacity, and meanneſs, ever preſume to enter the liſts, they will ſtand more confeſſed to view, and will the ſooner be covered with confuſion.

'It is another advantage reſulting from ſimple manners in the eminent ſtations, that the burden of rewarding merit is made lighter to the public, and the ſtate makes a ſaving of expences, that would be rendered ruinous by the inſatiable repacity of ambition. A ſenſible diſtribution of honours will diſpenſe with the neceſſity of magnificent preſents; and frugality, even in the grants of honours, will make the prince ſtill a better œconomiſt for the public good. That is the great end we ſhould have in view. To reſtrain the rich from launching into a profuſion of expence is not the point; prodigality is a fire that ſoon conſumes the materials it ſubſiſts upon. The prime object is to preſerve the men, who, unprovided with every thing but their talents, their knowledge, and their virtues, may be inclined to conſecrate themſelves to the ſervice of their country, from being tainted by the ſweets of luxury, and corrupted by the luſt of gold. The brighteſt diſtinctions, ſuch as are never profaned by ſordid miſapplications, ſhould be reſerved by perſons of their temper and genius. I can ſay of myſelf, that I ſerved my prince with all due zeal, and with conſiderable ſucceſs; and my own feelings inform me how vile a thing is gold when compared with the oaken branch and the laurel, thoſe ſweet remembrancers of the ſovereign's affection and eſteem. Moreover that eſteem, which is ſo grateful to the honeſt heart, eſpecially when ſeconded by the voice of public approbation, the prince will do well to reſerve for actions of real worth and utility, taking care, with a

calm dignity of reſolution, never to proſtitute them for undertakings vain in their nature, frivolous, or dangerous. That will be his true frugality. To maintain this properly, it will indeed demand a firm unſhaken conſtancy of mind: a ſpirit of juſtice, always on its guard againſt ſeduction or ſurpriſe; a determination of the will that never fluctuates, but checks even a riſing hope that it will ſoften into compliance. This great and dignified character will be acquired, nay, it will be ſupported, if a real love of virtue animate the ſovereign's breaſt. In that caſe, his opinion will be the opinion of the public, and his example will decide and fix the national character.'

'Shall I fairly own,' ſaid Tiberius, 'a difficulty that remains with me? At the rate you have gone on, the court, from whence the royal favour, intrigue, and luxury, are diſcarded, will grow rather ſerious and gloomy; and poſſibly then a young prince'——'Oh! I underſtand you; that the prince may want amuſement is your fear; but, my dear friend, I have not ſaid that the taſk of governing is a mere paſtime. And yet, even amidſt the ſolicitudes of royalty, there may be many hours of the ſweeteſt enjoyment. The miniſter, for inſtance, may report to him the progreſs of agriculture in places and provinces, which before were melancholy ſcenes of idleneſs, poverty, and diſtreſs: may he not then ſay to himſelf, an act of my will has now made millions happy? His ſages of juſtice may inform him, that by one of his laws the inheritance of an orphan has been wreſted from the griping hand of hard-hearted avarice: may he not ſay with exultation, heaven be praiſed! I have been the protector of the poor. From the war-office he will not receive conſolation of ſo pure and unmixed a nature. But when he is told with what zeal and generous ardour his faithful ſubjects ſhed their blood in the cauſe of their ſovereign and their country, regret and pity will ſo compound themſelves in mixed ſenſations of love, tenderneſs, and gratitude, that the tears of humanity will delight him. In ſhort, the vows and prayers of his own illuſtrious æra, and the bleſſings of future ages, which the conſcious

conſcious imagination will anticipate, all crowd together in his breaſt, and are the ſolid pleaſures of a ſovereign. And will not theſe ſuffice? Will there be ſtill a void left aching in his boſom? Like the kings of Perſia, in ancient times, he may viſit the provinces of his empire, diſtinguiſhing with his favours thoſe who promote induſtry and agriculture, plenty and population; while pride, inhumanity, and indolence, for working the contrary miſchief, will be ſure to meet the marks of his diſpleaſure. At Byzantium, as well as at Rome, the public granaries have been viſited by the emperors; would it be a degrading condeſcenſion if they made a progreſs into the country, to know with certainty that under the lowly roof of the peaſant bread has not been wanting for his helpleſs children? Alas! how uninſtructed muſt that prince be, in regard to his duty and his intereſt, who ſuffers a vacuity in his time! We muſt not imagine that a prince, in his moments of tranquillity, when he is detached from the cauſe and duties of his rank, is to remain a ſtranger to the ſweet ſenſations of domeſtic happineſs and ſocial pleaſure. He will have his ſelect friends; and, unbending himſelf with them, he will taſte the charms of rational delight. The man of virtue who wants little, and is therefore eaſily contented, diſplays in his converſation that ſerenity of ſober joy, which ſprings from peace and inward harmony: heart-felt eaſe, to which pride importuned by craving wants, and vice for ever ſuffering the corroſions of remorſe, are utter ſtrangers. An honeſt mind, it muſt be acknowledged, will find but little leiſure to relax itſelf from the duties of an important office; but the moments of vacation will be delightful. Remorſe, ambition, and fear, are baniſhed from the hallowed hour. The court, where uprightneſs, truth, and virtue, may walk ſecure, without fearing envy that lies in ambuſh, and without apprehending ſudden diſgrace from the whim of the prince, will not, perhaps, be the moſt brilliant court, but it will be the happieſt in the world.'—'It will not be crowded,' ſaid the emperor.—'And why not?' reſumed Beliſarius.—'The little ambitious fry, that love

to ſhine in eaſe and ſplendid vanity, will not flutter in the circle; but to recompenſe that loſs, men of probity and of uſeful talents will form a numerous party. I ſay numerous, my friend Tiberius, and I ſay it in honour of human nature. When virtue is in faſhion, the ſeeds of it will be diſcloſed in every heart. Public eſtimation is a kind of ſun in the moral world, that warms, that animates, and calls forth the latent principles of truth and honour. When the ſoul is ſunk in ſloth and languor, it is not the time to delineate its true character. Is it to be expected that a young man, who has heard nothing from his father but the panegyric of money; whoſe imagination has been dazzled with the luſtre of gold; who in cities and in villages has ſeen nothing ſo abject and deſpiſed as labour and induſtry; who has been taught by experience that pride can creep, that ambition will crouch, that law will bend, the road to honours be thrown open, and court favour diſpenſe its ſmiles at the beck and command of riches; that they, and they only, can protect him from injuſtice, or exerciſe the ſevereſt tyranny; that they adorn and embelliſh vice, ennoble meanneſs, and ſuperſede talents, ability, and virtue; is it to be expected, I ſay, that a young man educated in this train of thinking, ſhall be able to draw the line between good and evil, virtue and ſelf-intereſt? Let a different doctrine prevail; let the ſovereign, that fountain of manners, ſet the faſhion of the heart; let education and habits of virtue teach the value, the neceſſity of ſelf-approbation; let them awaken the love of honeſt fame, and a deſire to win the applauſe of good men; let the ſoul expatiate abroad to gather the ſuffrages of the preſent age, and to foreſtal the praiſe of future times; let fair renown be next to virtue the higheſt and greateſt good; let zeal for the moral character make honour dearer than life, and ſhame more dreadful than even annihilation; let theſe principles be once eſtabliſhed, and it will ſoon be found how feeble is the influence of ſordid views and mean deſires. Oh! my good friends! where would now be the names of Decius, Regulus, and the Catos had they not been ſouls of fire, inſpired by ho-

nour, and replete with virtue? To excite an emulation of their example, there must be an institution founded in wisdom, and real encouragement, to make men run the bright career of glory. It were vain and idle to require of the fathers of families, that they shall train up their children in the paths of virtue, if that very virtue be left to languish under disgrace, and bear the spurns of triumphant vice. To re-establish order, and give the manners the strength and beauty of system, all that is good in life must be appropriated to virtue; evil should be the portion of iniquity, and every advantange assigned to justice and to honour. Let government proceed thus systematically, and it will readily strike your observation how the manners will second the laws, and gain strength and enforcement from the popular opinion. Hopes and fears, rewards and punishments, dignities and disgrace, those are the engines that policy should set in motion on the side of virtue and civil liberty; by managing these properly, the world may be governed at discretion.

'But to keep more closely to the point: by proud and ostentatious manners the great are rendered insolent and avaricious; from simple manners spring the opposite qualities of moderation, justice, and humanity: and thus the leading interests of vice being lifted on the side of virtue, men will adopt the latter with the same spirit that attached them to the former.'

'You have given us a pleasing reverie,' said Justinian, 'an agreeable and flattering dream!'—'Far from it,' replied Belisarius; 'to think of making interest and self-love the springs of human actions is by no means a dream. Call to mind by what methods was formed, in the infancy of the republic, that glorious senatorial order, in which so many ardent virtues, such heroic patriotism, blazed forth upon the world. To what, think you, was it owing? It was because there was nothing at Rome superior to greatness of soul; it was because public veneration was attached to virtuous manners, and glory was the hero's sure reward. Such, in all periods of the world, have been the great springs and movers of the human heart.

'I am

'I am not now to learn that inveterate habits, and particularly the habits of deſpotic pride, give way unwillingly to the moſt powerful motives. But let it be obſerved, that for one ſon of profligacy and corruption, who would hold out with obſtinacy, in ſpite of ſhame, diſgrace, and infamy, there are a thouſand who would yield at once to the control of reaſon, and, having glory for their incitement, would walk contentedly in the paths of honour and virtue. Let me purſue the conſequences of this idea. I ſuppoſe the men of virtue are placed at the helm of government: I will, in that caſe, anſwer with my life for the prompt obedience, the fidelity, and the public ſpirit of a people, who are no longer bent under the yoke of oppreſſion, but, inſtead of being haraſſed by little tyrants, find their lives, their property, and their liberty, ſecure under the protection of the laws. The ſtate then begins to raiſe its head; concord prevails through all claſſes of the community; the plan of Conſtantine, built on a ſandy bottom, lays a deeper foundation; and from civil union I ſee ſpring up emulation, fortitude, zeal for the public good, and with theſe that weight among the nations which made Rome the miſtreſs of the world.'

While Beliſarius thus diſcourſed, Juſtinian beheld, in ſilent admiration, the enthuſiaſtic ardour with which the good old man, forgetting the infirmities of age, his miſeries, and his misfortunes, triumphed in the idea of rendering his country flouriſhing and happy.—'It is generous,' ſaid the emperor, 'to feel ſo warm a concern for an ungrateful people.'—'My friends,' replied the hero, 'I ſhould welcome and bleſs, as the moſt glorious of my life, the day on which I ſhould be thus accoſted: "Beliſarius, we are going now to let your blood guſh at every vein, but the price of it will be the accompliſhment of all your wiſhes."

His amiable daughter, Eudoxa, now came to inform him that his ſupper was ready. He went in, and ſet himſelf at table: Eudoxa, with a graceful air of modeſty and dignity, ſerved up to her father a plate of pulſe, and ſeated herſelf by him.—'And is that your ſupper?' ſaid the emperor.

emperor.—'It is,' replied Beliſarius; 'it was the frugal meal of Fabricius, and Fabricius was, at leaſt, my equal.'

'Let us depart,' ſaid Juſtinian to Tiberius; 'at a ſight like this I find myſelf covered with ſhame and confuſion.'

The court, in hopes of diſſipating the cloud which they perceived hung over the emperor's mind, had prepared a ſcene of feſtivity. He did not condeſcend to honour it with his preſence. At table, the idea that occupied his thoughts was, the ſupper of the old general; and as he withdrew—'Beliſarius is happier than I am,' ſaid he to himſelf; 'for he lays him down on his pillow without remorſe to break his quiet.'

CHAP. XIV.

'I LIVE but in his preſence,' ſaid the emperor next day to Tiberius, 'as they were on their way to viſit the hero; the compoſure and ſerenity of his mind tranſfuſe themſelves into mine. But as ſoon as I leave him, the clouds which in his converſation were diſperſed, collect themſelves again, and the former gloom returns upon me. Methought yeſterday I perceived, in his delineation of manners and principles, the portrait of human happineſs; and now it is a canvaſs preſenting an aſſemblage of bold and random colours, without arrangement or deſign. While he ſpeaks, every thing appears eaſy, and now I am involved in a ſcene of difficulties. In the firſt place, overloaded as the empire is with immoderate expences, the hero's ſcheme for making the burden lighter to the poor! his plan for new-modelling upon a better eſtabliſhment, an army well nigh annihilated by a war of twenty years! and then the multiplicity of taxes to be reduced to one general impoſt, light and ſimple!'—'He has ſeen the ſubject in all its points of view,' ſaid Tiberius, 'and will, I dare ſay, remove your difficulties. Acquaint him with the reflections that have occurred to you.'

The converſation was accordingly opened with a ſtate of the emperor's reaſonings; and, after hearing them attentively—'I knew,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'that I ſhould ſtart in your mind a number of doubts; but I flatter myſelf I ſhall be able to remove them all.

'The

'The expences of the court, according to my plan, are now reduced. We have baniſhed luxury and favouritiſm. Let us now take a view of the metropolis; and pray tell me the reaſon why ſuch a ſwarm of inhabitants, lazy, indolent, and almoſt without number, ſhould be a burden to the ſtate? The corn which is diſtributed among them would maintain twenty legions.* It was in order to people the city, and make it emulate Rome, that Conſtantine charged himſelf with this ruinous expence. But by what title can an uſeleſs and inactive race pretend a right to be thus maintained at the public charge? The Romans, a people altogether of a military genius, might well claim to be nouriſhed, even in the time of profound peace, by the fruits of their conqueſts; yet, in the very height of their ſplendour and their glory, a portion of land to cultivate was all they required; and that being allotted by the ſtate, it is well known with what eagerneſs they iſſued forth to the labours of the field. But with us what uſeful end is anſwered by that ever-craving multitude that beſiege the gates of the palace? Was it with ſuch men that I expelled the Huns, thoſe ravagers of Thrace? The city ſhould retain only ſuch a number of inhabitants as can find due employment to maintain themſelves by their induſtry; the reſt ſhould be ſent forth to coloniſe in different parts of the empire. They would increaſe population, and ſubſiſt upon the fruits of their labour. Agriculture is the ſeminary of ſoldiers: a good and ſerviceable militia will never be formed out of a lazy race, who are contented to loiter away their days in idle poverty. Let the laws, above all the taxes, be reduced to a plan of ſimplicity; and the militia of the palace will be undone by inſignificance. What an immenſe ſaving may be made by that circumſtance need not be mentioned.

'The moſt alarming expence of government is maintenance of the army. But even that expence will be reduced

* 40,000 buſhels per day: the buſhel, *modius*, one foot ſquare, and four inches deep. The Roman foot was ten of our inches. The allowance of the ſoldier was five buſhels a month, or the ſixth of a buſhel per day: therefore 40,000 buſhels, at ſix men to a buſhel, would maintain 240,000 men.

duced to the regular body of the legions; for the veterans, eſtabliſhed in colonies upon the frontiers of the empire, ſubſiſt by their own induſtry, and their immunities and exemptions from all civil offices ſtand in the nature of pay. The colonies, the maſter-ſtroke of Conſtantine's genius and policy, are not as yet annihilated; to make them revive in all the ſpirit of their original deſign depends upon the will of the prince; for, in fact, the number of gallant ſoldiers, who are now drooping into poverty and indolence, deſire no better reward than to be ſent to cultivate and defend the lands they have acquired by conqueſt. The ſame may be aſſerted in regard to the troops which have been ſettled upon the borders of rivers*. Thoſe places, now improved and cultivated, repay with abundance the induſtry of the labourer.

'Whole ſwarms of barbarians have been conſtantly crowding about our frontiers, in hopes of gaining a ſettlement† in our provinces; and occaſionally they have been admitted, without ſufficient precaution‡; but the danger conſiſted in admitting too large a number. Let foreign ſettlers, therefore, not be embodied together, but diſperſed into diſtant places, and let the waſte and uncultivated lands be allotted to them. Of theſe we have, alas! too many‖; but a vigilant and active government would ſoon naturalize the ſovereign intruders, and incorporate them with the reſt of the ſtate as uſeful citizens and well-affected ſoldiers.

'The legions therefore are now the only remaining burthen to the ſtate; and the tribute which we draw from Egypt, from Africa, and Sicily, would well ſupport three times the number the government ever had in its ſervice§. It is not reſpecting this article that parſimony is

* They were called *ripenſes*. Alexander Severus firſt eſtabliſhed them.

† Theſe ſettlers were called *Læti*, and their lands *Lætic* farms.

‡ As the Goths under the emperor Valent

‖ The lands of the FISCUS, or treaſury, were immenſe. The puniſhment of moſt offences was a CONFISCATION of property.

§ Sicily paid a tribute to the Romans of 7,200,000 buſhels of corn

is required concerning their maintenance*. The ſtate may be at eaſe, but it cannot be too ſtrenuous in its endeavours to fix them upon a good and regular eſtabiſhment: There was a time when admiſſion into the legions was an honour reſerved for the citizens of Rome†, and was warmly diſputed by the young men, who were eager candidates for it. The time is now no more, but it ſhould be renewed; and then, what may not be achieved by men who have both honour and bread!'

'Men are no longer the ſame,' ſaid the emperor.—'The nature of men is the ſame,' replied Beliſarius; 'and nothing is changed but opinion, that ſovereign miſtreſs of the manners. In fact, we only want the ſoul of the great man, his genius, and his example, to expand themſelves abroad, and fix the principles and the manners. From a million of inſtances that ſupport this propoſition, take a ſingle fact, which is, in my eſtimation, worthy of the old republic in its greateſt period, and evinces plainly, that in all ages the virtue of mankind has diſplayed itſelf in proportion to the demand made for it by thoſe who were ſufficiently ſkilled in the powers of human nature.

'Rome was taken by Totila. One of our brave officers, whoſe name was Paul had ſallied out of the city at the head of a ſmall party and entrenched himſelf on the eminence, where he was ſurrounded by the enemy. Famine, it was not doubted, would ſoon reduce him to the neceſſity of ſurrendering; and, in fact, he was in want of every thing. In this exigence, he addreſſed himſelf to his ſoldiers:—"My friends," ſaid he, "we muſt either periſh, or ſurvive in ſlavery. You, I know, will not heſitate about the choice; but it is not enough to periſh, we muſt

corn; Egypt, 21,600,000; and Africa, 43,200,000: at the rate of ſix men to a buſhel there was a daily maintenance for 1,200,000 men.

*The monthly pay of a ſoldier was 400 aſſes, value 25 ſilver denarii, equal to one *nummus aureus:* The *aſſis* was an ounce of copper, the ſilver denarius weighted one, and the aureus 140 grains.

† This honour was alſo eagerly diſputed by the youth of the provinces, who had the rights of the city.

periſh

periſh nobly. The coward may reſign himſelf to be conſumed by famine, he may linger in miſery, and wait in a diſpirited condition, for the friendly hand of death. But we who have been ſchooled, and educated in the field of battle, we are not now to learn the proper uſe of our arms; we know how to carve for ourſelves an honourable death. Yes, let us die, but not inglorious and unrevenged; let us die covered with the blood of our enemies, that our fall, inſtead of raiſing the ſmile of deliberate malice, may give them cauſe to mourn over the victory that undoes us. Can we wiſh to loiter a few years more in life, when we know that a very few muſt bring us to our graves? The limits of human life cannot be enlarged by nature, but glory can extend them, and give a ſecond life."

'He finiſhed his harangue: the ſoldiery declared their reſolution to follow him. They began their march; the intrepid countenance with which they advanced ſoon denoted to the enemy a deſign to give battle with all the courage of the laſt deſpair. Without waiting, therefore, to receive the attack of this illuſtrious band, the Goths thought proper to compound, by an immediate grant of life and liberty.'

'I can count, my friends, upon at leaſt two millions in the empire capable of the ſame magnanimity, if another Paul were at the head of them. We can reckon alſo ſome chiefs of this illuſtrious claſs; our victories have pointed them out. While ſuch reſources remain, let us not deſpair of the commonwealth. Are you ſtill to be told to what a degree of proſperity, affluence, and population, the force of the ſtate may be increaſed? Recal to mind the condition in ancient times, I will not ſay of Gaul, which we meanly abandoned*, but of Spain, Greece, Italy, the republic of Carthage, and the various realms of Aſia, from the banks of the Nile to the Euxine ſhore. Recollect that Romulus†, who in the infancy of the ſtate

* In order to deliver Rome and Italy from the Goths, the emperor ceded to them the faireſt provinces of Gaul.

† The legion at that time conſiſted of 3000 foot and 300 horſe.

had but one legion, was able at his death to bequeath to his ſucceſſor forty-ſeven thouſand men under arms. By that circumſtance you will be inſtructed what may be done by the activity, vigilance, and ſpirit of a ſingle man. The empire, it is ſaid, is undone. How! are Italy, Sicily, Spain, Libya, and Egypt, all exhauſted? Are Bœotia, Macedonia, and the plains of Aſia, which made the riches of Darius and Alexander, are they grown barren and unproductive? But the numbers of mankind are thinned! Oh, my friends, let ſocial happineſs be re-eſtabliſhed in thoſe regions, and the progreſs of population will be repaid: men will be found in plenty; and then I ſhould have courage to propoſe the vaſt plan which I have meditated, and which, perhaps, is the only way to render the empire more powerful and more flouriſhing than ever.' —'And what can that plan be?' ſaid the emperor.—'I will open it to you,' replied Beliſarius.

'The operations of war, according to our way of conducting it, exceeded the ſtrength of our armies; we were quite exhauſted by laborious marches and fatigue of every kind. The diverſion of our arms gave the enemy an opportunity to alarm us with ſudden incurſions, which the line of veterans and of Agrarian ſoldiers, poſted on our borders, was not ſufficient to withſtand; and, in conſequence, before the regular legions could come up to their ſupport, devaſtation and terror without control ſpread a general ravage*. In order, therefore, to oppoſe to this torrent a conſtant fence, I would new model the empire upon a plan of military policy, in ſuch ſort, that every freeman ſhould be a ſoldier, but for the purpoſes only of internal defence. Upon this ſyſtem, every prefect would have under his command a well-arranged army, of which the cohorts would be formed by the cities, and the le-

* In the time of Auguſtus, the frontier provinces did not exceed nine. The legions were eſtabliſhed at fixed and regular poſts. But the number of provinces increaſing afterwards, the legions became inadequate to their ſervice. Conſtantine withdrew them to an interior ſtation, and the lines of veterans, to whom lands were allotted on the borders of the enemy, made but a feeble ſubſtitute in the room of more regular forces.

gions

gions by the provinces, with proper places appointed for their rendezvous, that they might ſo act in concert, as at the ſound of a trumpet to aſſemble immediately, and be embodied at the ſhorteſt warning.

'From an army of this kind would reſult this further advantage, that every individual would glow with the love of his native ſoil; that ſoil which he has helped to people, which his hands have cultivated, and which is endeared to him by the labour he has employed to make it flouriſhing and fruitful. With theſe incentives in their boſoms, you may imagine to yourſelf how ardent they would be in the juſt defence of their property*.

'In an empire of wide extent there is nothing ſo difficult as to diffuſe through the whole an idea of a common cauſe, a principle of civil union, and one general intereſt. Among people ſeparated by the ſea we ſeldom obſerve any conſiderable degree of attachment to one another. The ſouth is wholly indifferent about the dangers that alarm the north. The Dalmatian and the Illyrian march under our banners into Aſia with the coldeſt inſenſibility: to them it is a matter of no concern whether the Tigris flows under our laws or thoſe of the Perſians. By military diſcipline he is retained in the camp, and from the love of plunder he derives a degree of ſpirit; but cool reflection ſucceeds: by fatigue and labour he is relaxed; and in the firſt moment of diſcontent or terror he abandons a cauſe which is not his own. Upon my plan the very reverſe would be the caſe: the name of country would not be an empty ſound to the ſoldier, but the object of his affection, ever dear and preſent, and twined about his heart by all the tendereſt ties of nature. To enflame the ſoldier with ſpirit againſt the enemy, the proper harangue may be thus conceived:—"Friends, countrymen, and fellow-citizens! behold the lands which gave you nurture; lo, the roof under which you drew your firſt breath! the tomb of your anceſtors, the cradle of your infants, and the bed

* Land-poſſeſſions inſpire their cultivators with courage to defend them. The fruit of the ſoil is the ſtake which the conqueror propoſes to win.

of your wives, whom you are now going to defend."—
'And are not theſe powerful and pathetic motives? They have made more heroes than even love and ambition. Of their reſiſtleſs influence over minds trained up to ideas of war, and the rigorous duties of military diſcipline, you may eaſily form a judgment.

'For my part, I dwell with inexpreſſible delight on the picture, which even now imagination fondly draws, of a laborious, warlike youth, preſſing with ardour in all our towns and villages to the ſtandard of their country; a ſpirited and active race, preſerved by labour from the vices of indolence, inured by habit to the rigours of manly exerciſe, addicted to the uſeful arts of peace, and eager to take the field upon the firſt alarm of danger. In a militia ſo conſtituted, the crime of deſertion would be a crime againſt nature; and their courage and fidelity would be ſecured to their country by every ſacred bond that holds ſociety together. The ſtate would not the leſs on this account be provided with its regular legions, which would be a moving bulwark, ready to be advanced whenever danger called. By theſe means a ſpirit of emulation and a warlike genius would be diffuſed throughout the empire, and the reward of bravery might be a commiſſion to ſerve in the regular and more honourable body of the legions, which would be thus recruited, without thoſe raſh levies of men which partiality, fraud, colluſion, or negligence, inliſt into the army. We ſhould have a muſter of the people. How ſuperior would be the force of the empire to any former period of its ſtrength, even though we ſhould look back to the days of its moſt refulgent glory*! Would the enemy of the South or the North dare, in that caſe, to invade us? Would they aſſault a people, who with an undiſciplined army, unprovided with the proper inſtruments of war, and almoſt without bread, have ſo often beat back their irruptions?'

'And who can anſwer,' interrupted Juſtinian, 'that in a military ſtate like this the people will always be under

* Under Auguſtus 23 legions; under Tiberius 25; Adrian 30; Galba 372,000 men, half Romans, and the other half auxiliaries.

the

the control of government? Who will venture to enſure a due ſubordination?'—'It will be enſured,' replied Beliſarius, 'by their own intereſt, by the benignity of the laws, and the moderation, juſtice, and ſagacity of a wiſe adminiſtration. You will be ſo good as to bear in your minds, that I made the happineſs of the people the very corner-ſtone of the edifice.'—'It is very true,' ſaid Juſtinian; 'but the people are prone to change, fond of innovation, inconſtant, reſtleſs, and ready to be inflamed by the firſt factious leader that hopes to find his account in civil commotions.'—'You ſee the people in one light only,' replied Beliſarius; 'you judge of them in their preſent condition, a ſtate of ſuffering like that in which they were plunged at Rome, when Rome had fallen into misfortunes. But of this you may be ſure, that men always know their own wants, and will underſtand their rights: let the prince ſuccour the former, and protect the latter, and you may rely upon it that they will acknowledge all his patriot cares with gratitude. The ſovereign's love will be repaid by the affections of his people. If he proved juſt, benevolent, and wiſe, confiding the offices of his adminiſtration to none but men worthy of ſeconding the good intentions of a patriot prince, the people on their part will be docile and ſubmiſſive. By what metamorphoſis, I ſhould be glad to know, can a few diſcontented ſpirits, a paltry handful of ſeditious malcontents, convert a people who have reaſon to be ſatisfied into a ſet of perjured rebels? Such a revolt is only to be dreaded by him who leaves his ſubjects to groan under oppreſſion; the character of reigning for the good of his community will always be a bulwark againſt treaſons and conſpiracies. Can it be imagined that, amidſt the applauſes ſent up to the throne by a grateful people, rebellion will dare to erect its ſtandard? Where is it to ſeek accomplices? Will it go into ſcenes of rural tranquillity, where peace, liberty, and plenty, ſit ſmiling on the land? Will it ſkulk in towns where induſtry works in cheerfulneſs, and the fortunes of every citizen, his life, his property, and his rights, are under the ſafeguard of the laws? Will it ca-

bal in families, where innocence, truth, honour, and the ſanctity of marriage-vows, co-operate with all the tendereſt ties of nature, and endear the domeſtic ſcene? Can treaſon in ſuch places expect to find aſſociates? It will not expect it; for the empire of juſtice is immovable, or nothing ſublunary can have a laſting duration. I will allow you that, in making the ſubject powerful, in order to render him happy and contented, there is a riſk that requires a daring mind, but of that daring mind I ſhould be, though my ruin were the conſequence: I ſhould ſpeak out and tell my people, I put arms into your hands, to ſerve and aid me if my government be juſt, and to aſſiſt uſurpation if I ſhould be guilty of it. This you will deem raſhneſs, but in my idea it is the height of prudence thus to put under due reſtraint both my own paſſions and thoſe of the people, thereby eſtabliſhing a ſure barrier againſt the ill conſequences of either. With my crown I ſhould, by theſe means, tranſmit to my ſucceſſor an hereditary neceſſity to govern according to law; and that neceſſity, thus rendered deſcendible, would be the brighteſt monument of glory that ever monarch left behind him. I am aware, my friends, that genuine virtue does not act upon the principle of fear; but if virtue be entrenched by it, I ſhall think it a conſiderable advantage; for what virtue is at all times ſure of walking upright? I know it is a maxim that a prince is above the laws; the very law itſelf aſſerts it, and perhaps wiſely; but my firſt care ſhould be at my acceſſion to forget that maxim, nor would I forgive the ſycophant who ſhould remind me of it. My friends, I now muſt take my leave. To change the face of things, and new model an empire, is a laborious taſk: let us repoſe ourſelves a little. To-morrow I ſhall be glad of your company. There ſtill remains behind another grievance which afflicts my ſpirits; but I will reſerve it for another opportunity. At our next meeting I ſhall endeavour to intereſt Tiberius in regard to the matter I now only alluded to.'

'His views are, no doubt, great and extenſive,' ſaid the emperor, as he was on his way back. 'But if his

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ſchemes are practicable, they muſt be undertaken by ſome prince in the vigour of youth, who aſcends the throne with a manly firmneſs of mind, a ſpirit of juſtice, of courage, and of virtue. Added to theſe qualities, he will have occaſion for a long reign, in order to bring about ſo wonderful a revolution.'—'I am not able to decide,' ſaid Tiberius; 'but in his plan I thought I perceived ſome things that require only an effort of the will to compaſs them; and if the reſt muſt depend upon time, that time, it is to be hoped, is not ſo remote but we may expect to ſee it drawn upon us ſhortly.'—'My dear Tiberius,' replied the emperor, 'you behold difficulties with the eye of youthful inexperience; your activity vaults over them; but my infirmities ſhrink back diſmayed. To execute great projects, alas! ſaid he with a deep ſigh we muſt begin early. It is not the time to begin to live, when all we need is to learn to die; and yet I muſt ſee the good old man again. His converſation, it is true, afflicts me, but I had rather indulge a pleaſing ſadneſs in his company, than ſuffer the inſulting gaiety of vain unthinking men, who throng about me in my palace.'

CHAP. XV.

AT the accuſtomed hour, the next day, the emperor and Tiberius found the hero in his garden, enjoying the departing rays of the weſtern ſun.—'It no longer lights me,' ſaid Beliſarius, with a look expreſſive of inward happineſs, 'but it ſtill warms and comforts me. In that ſtupendous orb I adore the bounty and magnificence of the great Creator.'—'To hear this ſtrain of piety from a warrior,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'delights and raviſhes me; it is the triumph of religion!'—'The triumph of religion,' replied Beliſarius, 'is to adminiſter conſolation in the hour of adverſity, and to mingle in the cup of ſorrow the ſweets of calm delight and heavenly ſatisfaction. That religion affords this heart-felt joy who can give better teſtimony than myſelf? Overwhelmed with years, deprived of ſight, and deſtitute of friends, abandoned over to myſelf, and nothing preſent to my thoughts but the decline of frail mortality,

tality, affliction, and my approaching grave, I have nothing left but to ſend up my meditation to heaven: to deprive me of that were, perhaps, to drive me to deſpair.—The good man walks with God; a ſecret conſciouſneſs that he is acceptable to his Creator warms his heart; and from that ſource he derives ſtrength and rapture even in the midſt of affliction. When I was firſt ſurrounded with misfortunes, deſerted by all, and given up to my enemies, who were plotting my ruin, I have often ſaid to myſelf, "Be of courage, Beliſarius; you are free from ſelf-reproach, and your God beholds you." My heart, where all was laid waſte and deſolate with miſery, revived and glowed within me at that reflection; I felt it expand in my boſom with new life and joy. I hold the ſame ſelf-conference ſtill; and when my daughter is with me, yielding to the ſtroke of affliction, and bathing my face with tears—"Can you be afraid," I aſk her, "that he who ſent us on this ſtage of life will ceaſe to prompt, to invigorate, and ſupport us? Your heart is endowed with ſenſibility, and truth and pureſt virtue reſide there; your father has not more to anſwer for than yourſelf; and can you imagine that the fountain of all goodneſs will deſert that virtue which he loves? Oh, my daughter! come but the moment when he, that with his breath calleth forth my ſoul into exiſtence, ſhall command it into his glorious preſence, and then we ſhall ſee whether wicked men will follow thither to diſturb the ſtate of bliſs." My poor daughter Eudoxa liſtens with fixed attention to this conſoling language, and her tears fall as ſhe hears it; but they are tears that flow mingled with delight; and thus by degrees I lead her to conſider life as a little voyage, which we perform in a little bark not accommodated to our wiſhes, and therefore with joy we approach the port where all is peace, delight, and rapture.'

'You have framed for yourſelf,' ſaid the emperor, 'a very comfortable ſcheme of religion!'--'It is true religion,' replied Beliſarius.—'Would you have me contemplate the God whom I adore in the light of a ſullen and offended tyrant, who delights in vengeance only? I know full well that,

that when he is repreſented to us by men of dark, of jealous, haughty, and melancholy tempers, the image of a Deity takes a tincture from the imaginations it has paſſed through, and a benevolent God is made to appear a fretful, paſſionate, and irraſcible being, like the creatures that talk of him. They perhaps find their account in making their own vices the attribute of heaven: but I endeavour to figure to myſelf the perfections which it is my duty to imitate. Do you think this an error? It is at leaſt an innocent one. From the hands of my Creator I came forth weak and feeble; he will be indulgent therefore; to him it is apparent that I have neither the madneſs nor the wickedneſs to offend him: that infatuation of mind, that impotence of pride, is foreign to my heart. To my God I am more dutifully attached, more fervently devoted, than ever I was to the emperor: and of this I am ſure, that the emperor, who is but a weak erring man, would never have done me harm, if, like my God, he could have read my heart.'

'Alas! that God,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'is, notwithſtanding what you have ſaid, a God of wrath; a terrible God!'—'Yes, to the guilty he is terrible,' replied Beliſarius; 'but I am ſelf-acquitted in my own conſcience; it tells me I am good and virtuous; and in the ſame manner that the flagitious ſoul is incompatible with the eſſence of the divinity, I have the comfort to think that the ſoul of the juſt man is analogous to the fountain of all goodneſs.'—'But which of us is the juſt man?' ſaid the emperor.—'He that endeavours moſt to be ſo,' replied Beliſarius: 'for goodneſs conſiſts altogether in volition.'

'That you delight in the contemplation of your God,' ſaid Tiberius, 'is not ſurpriſing, ſince you behold him in ſo amiable a light!'—'Alas!' replied the old man, 'I know how much I am obliged to ſtrain my feeble powers in order to conceive ſuitably of the Divine Majeſty; and, after all the efforts of a limited capacity to form into one complex idea all that is ſublime aud beautiful, and good, I am conſcious how inadequate the image is at laſt. But what can a man, who would elevate his thoughts to a no-

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tion of his Maker? If that all-wise and incomprehensible Being delights in any thing, it is in the effusion of benevolence to all his creatures: this reflection paints him to me in the mildest attitudes, and on that idea I therefore dwell, in order to form the most endearing conception of him.'

'But it will not be enough,' said the emperor, 'to define him a benevolent Being: you must call him just also.'—'They are synonymous words,' replied Belisarius. 'To delight in goodness, and to have a detestation for evil; to reward the former, and to punish the latter, that is the true character of goodness: that is my first, my unalterable principle. Has it never happened to you as it has to me, to attend the levee of Titus, of Trajan, and Antoninus? That is one of the reveries in which my imagination loves to indulge. I fancy myself in that court, composed of the true friends of the crown: I see those illustrious princes dispense the smiles of complacence all around the honest circle; I see them communicate the beams of glory and of majesty, mixed and blended with such pleasing delicacy and softness, that every heart participates of the joy the sovereign feels in diffusing happiness to others. If that be an august scene, how much more glorious and refulgent will be the court of him who is at last to receive my soul! It will be filled with the Tituses, the Trajans, and the Antoninuses, those delights of mankind. It is in their company, and that of the virtuous of all ages and of all countries, that the poor blind Belisarius will glow with purest fire before the throne of a good and equitable God.'—'And the wicked,' said Tiberius, 'how do you dispose of them?'—'They will not be there! I shall hope,' continued he, 'to see in that blaze of glory the august and wretched old man who took away my eyes; for he has done much good from the inclination of his heart; and if ever he did wrong, he was surprised into it. He will rejoice, I believe, to see my lost organs restored to me!'—And thus the hero spoke, his whole countenance was irradiated with joy, while the emperor poured floods of tears, reclining upon the breast of Tiberius.

At length his tender sensations giving way to reflection,

'Do

—'Do you hope,' ſaid the emperor, 'to find the pagan heroes in that paradiſe which has ſo enraptured you?* Do you think they will be admitted?'—'My good neighbour,' replied Beliſarius, 'you do not mean, I am ſure, to afflict me in my old age! I am poor and wretched, without any other comfort than that which ſprings up within me from the ſcenes of futurity which I have fancied to myſelf. If it be an error, pray indulge me in it; it cheers my heart, and God is not offended; it enlarges my idea of his benevolence, and I love him more ardently for it. I cannot be induced to think, that between my ſoul and that of Ariſtides, of Marcus Aurelius and of Cato, there is an eternal abyſs of ſeparation; if I thought there were, I feel that my love for the great author of our exiſtence would be diminiſhed by it.'

'Young man,' ſaid the emperor to Tiberius, 'while you honour the enthuſiaſtic virtue of this hero, you muſt not believe him an orthodox guide. Beliſarius never pretended to be deeply verſed in the myſteries of faith.'—'And who can be deeply verſed?' replied the hero. 'Alas! who can preſume to think his eye has pervaded the great ſcheme of providence! The all-wiſe Creator has given us two guides, which ought to operate in concert with each other; and thoſe guides are, the light of faith, and of natural reaſon. The truth of which we are convinced by intuition, faith will never contradict. Revelation is but a ſupplement to the light of nature: it is the ſame voice that ſpeaks to us from the throne of heaven, and from the bottom of the heart. It is impoſſible that they ſhould be at variance; and if, on the one hand, the truth that ſtirs within me announces the juſt and good to be acceptable to his Creator, I ſhall never hear, on the other, that he is obnoxious to the wrath of heaven.'—'And who can be anſwerable,' ſaid the emperor, 'that this inward ſentiment is the revelation of nature?'—'If

* It has been decided by the fathers, that God will work a miracle, rather than let him periſh everlaſtingly who has faithfully followed the laws of nature. But Juſtinian, it is well known, was a bigot, and of a perſecuting ſpirit.

of

it be not,' replied Beliſarius, 'a juſt and benevolent God ſuffers me to be miſled, and all is loſt. It is the light of natural reaſon that tells me there is an all governing mind, that commands me to worſhip him, and promulgates his laws in my very ſoul. And will the wiſe Creator give me by thoſe means an inward conviction, that may prove at laſt the greſſeſt error? Alas! whoever is my antagoniſt in theſe points, I beg him to leave me ſtill my conſcience, the light of intuition: it is my guide and my beſt ſupport. Without it I can no longer diſtinguiſh right from wrong, or good from evil: truth and falſehood become indiſcriminate, and my duty loſes its ſanction. I do not even know that there are any duties to bind me: I am then blind indeed; and they who took me from the light of the ſun, were by far leſs barbarous than the man who would extinguiſh in me the internal light of reaſon.'

'Let me aſk you,' ſaid Juſtinian, 'what do you perceive ſo clearly by this faint glimmering ray within the mind?'—'I perceive,' replied the hero, 'that the religion which intimates to me a juſt and benevolent God, is a true religion; and that whatever is repugnant to that fine inward ſentiment, is not of that religion. Shall I avow my principles? I am attached to that religion, becauſe it renders me better, and gives a dignity to my nature. If I felt that it made me haughty, fierce, and hard of heart, I ſhould abjure it at once, and I ſhould ſay to my God, "In the dilemma which obliges me to be either wicked or an unbeliever, I chooſe the latter, and am ſure it will leaſt offend you." 'But happily the religion I embrace is congenial to my heart. Love God, and love his works: can any thing be more ſimple, juſt, and natural? To wiſh good to him who does us evil; what a noble morality! how generous and ſublime! In our misfortunes, to conſider all as a trial of virtue, how ſweet and comfortable the philoſophy! Thus far I am content; and, while I poſſeſs this moral ſyſtem, if myſteries are propoſed to me, I acknowledge them above my reaſon, and I ſubmit, with a ſincere compaſſion for thoſe

whoſe

whose judgment wants the same rectitude and docility; at the same time I recommend them to the supreme goodness of the Father of all, and to the infinite mercy of that omniscient Judge, who sees the paths of error, and can forgive it.'

'In this way of proceeding,' said Justinian, 'you are going to deal out salvation to numbers without distinction!'—'And is it necessary,' replied Belisarius, 'that numbers should be in a state of reprobation?'—'I feel with you,' said Justinian, 'that it is more comfortable to love God than to fear him; but all nature attests his vengeance and the rigour of his decrees.'—'For my part,' said Belisarius, 'I am persuaded that he only punishes when the divine grace cannot be extended; that he is not the origin of evil; that he has formed the best possible system, and has diffused all the good that system was capable of receiving*. That is my theology. Let it be proposed throughout the world, and it will be found worthy of being embraced with zeal and veneration: the voice of nature will speak aloud in favour of it. Should violence and cruelty arm it with sword and fire; should the rulers of the earth, who profess this religion, with bigot rage bid the fiends of hell overrun the world, and in the name of God excruciate those whom they ought to pity and to love, they will establish one or other of these two propositions: either that their religion is barbarous like themselves, or they give the lie to the doctrine of truth.'

'You have raised,' said Justinian, 'a serious and important question! To throw some light upon it, it will be proper to inquire whether a prince has a right to establish throughout his dominions an uniformity of faith, and one general mode of worship. If this right be inherent in the crown, how can it be exerted against rebellious and stubborn dissenters but by force and punishment?'

'As I am making a profession of faith,' said Belisarius, 'I will frankly own, that whatever concerns the good order of society, and has an influence on the man-

* The opinion of the Stoic school, which was adopted by Leibnitz, and other Optimists is here ascribed to Belisarius.

ners, is of neceſſity ſubject to the juriſdiction of the ſovereign, 'not as the infallible judge of truth and falſehood, but as a magiſtrate whoſe province it is to compute the political good or evil that reſults from the actions of men: and this opinion of mine I found upon this principle, which ſhould be a firſt principle in every man's creed, namely, that God is the friend of order, and authorizes nothing that can diſturb it.'—'Well then,' ſaid the emperor, 'do you doubt that there is a cloſe and intimate relation between the eſtabliſhed faith and the manners?'—'I acknowledge,' replied Beliſarius, 'that there are many truths, by their nature interwoven with the manners; but take this with you, that there are intuitive truths planted by the hand of God in every breaſt, which no man in his ſenſes will call in queſtion. Whereas the truth of myſteries, which are beyond the reach of the human underſtanding, and therefore require a revelation, has no connexion with the morals of mankind. For if we conſider a moment, we ſhall perceive that the all-wiſe Being has detached his myſteries from the great ſyſtem of ethics, for purpoſes the moſt important to ſociety; namely, that without waiting for a revelation man ſhould be led by the propenſity of his nature to a moral conduct. And if providence has thought fit to make the welfare of ſociety, the political happineſs of mankind, the fate of empires, and the courſe of human contingencies, altogether independent of the ſublime truths of revelation, my queſtion is, why ſhould not the civil magiſtrate imitate the diſpenſations of the Supreme Being? The ſovereign ſhould inquire diſpaſſionately whether, by believing or not believing any particular ſpeculative point, mankind would in a moral ſenſe be better or worſe, and in a political view more valuable citizens, or more faithful ſubjects. This I will take upon me to ſay ſhould be the rule of ſovereign authority; and, in conſequence of it, you ſee what a number of ingenious diſputes would be excluded from civil government.'

'I obſerve,' ſaid the emperor, 'that you leave nothing to the ſuperintendance of the magiſtrate but what eſſentially

tially concerns the intereſts of ſociety: and yet among all the important duties of ſovereignty, the moſt ſacred office ſurely conſiſts in being the vicegerent of heaven, for the purpoſes of enforcing the diſpenſations of the eternal will.'—'Ah! let them be vicegerents of almighty goodneſs,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'and they will do well to leave the miniſtry of vengeance to the demons of hell.'—'That the darkneſs of ignorance ſhould be diſpelled, and that truth ſhould have its triumph throughout the world, muſt be allowed,' ſaid the emperor, 'to be co-incident with the plan of infinite goodneſs.'—'Truth cannot fail to triumph,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'but it muſt not be by the arm of fleſh. Do you not perceive that, by putting the ſword of vengeance into the hand of truth, you entruſt error with it alſo? The very poſſeſſion of that ſword will be ever deemed a ſufficient authority to wield it without mercy; and, let me add, perſecution will always be on the ſide of the ſtrongeſt, and will there erect its banners according to the prevalence of opinion, and, as that ſuggeſts, will glut itſelf with the blood of the unhappy victims. In this manner, we know, Anaſthaſius perſecuted that mode of faith which Juſtinian now protects. The deſcendants of men, who were formerly murdered by the ſpirit of intolerance, have now reverſed the ſcene, and in their turn commit a daily maſſacre upon the poſterity of thoſe who not long ſince butchered mankind for the ſervice of another religion. Behold thoſe two princes who thought to render themſelves acceptable to God by piouſly murdering their fellow-creatures! Suppoſing the principle to be right, can either of them be ſure that the blood he ſpilt was that with which God deſired to ſee his altars imbrued? Error has an immenſity of ſpace, and truth is like a mathematical point in the prodigious void. And who has hit that point? Each man aſſumes that happineſs to himſelf; but upon what proof? If there be the cleareſt evidence that he is right, can that evidence authoriſe him to inſiſt, and to inſiſt ſword in hand, that mankind ſhould be convinced by it? Perſuaſion comes from heaven, or it is the work of man. If from heaven, it will bring with it the cre-

dentials of its miſſion; if it be of human origin, it can only claim the authority of reaſon over the faculties of the underſtanding. Each man is anſwerable for his own ſoul. It is his buſineſs, therefore, and his only, to determine the choice upon which the happineſs or miſery of his future exiſtence depends. You would compel me to think as you do; and if you are miſtaken, you ſee how dear it coſts me. As to yourſelf, the error might have been innocent; will it be innocent to work my ruin? Alas! why is man ſo arrogant to ſet up his own religious creed as a law to others? Millions, who had entertained a rational ſyſtem of belief, have been ſeduced and impoſed upon. But let it be even ſuppoſed that the zealous religioniſt is infallible: is it my duty to attach infallibility to any human opinion? God, he will ſay, enlightens him; let him then charitably pray, that God will favour me in the ſame manner. But, after all, if this infallibility be aſſumed upon human evidence, what ſecurity has the zealot for himſelf or for me, whom he has forced into his ſect? The only point upon which all the theologiſts agree is, that they do not comprehend the very myſteries they dare to pronounce upon with ſuch peremptory deciſion: and ſhall it be a crime in me to doubt where they do not underſtand? Let pure and ſimple faith deſcend from heaven, and it will be ſure of gaining proſelytes: but decrees and penal edicts will give two things only to the world, rebels and hypocrites. The brave will rebel, to vindicate the rights of the free born mind, and they will be martyred; cowards will wear the maſk of diſſimulation; while the fanatics of every ſect will be ſo many tigers let looſe upon mankind. Caſt an eye upon Theodoric, that wiſe king of the Goths, whoſe reign (if we except the latter end of it) was not inferior to the adminiſtration of our moſt virtuous princes. He was of the Arian perſuaſion; but ſo far from deſiring to plant his own faith by the deſtruction of mankind, that he puniſhed the occaſional conformity of his favourites with death. "How can I think," he uſed to ſay, "that you will not betray me, ſince with a ſpirit of the baſeſt complaſance you

betray

betray him who was adored by your forefathers." The emperor Conſtantius thought the ſame. With him it was never a crime in the ſubject to be ſteady in his religious tenets; on the contrary, it was in his eyes a ſin of the deepeſt die in any courtier to adjure his faith for temporal motives, and betray his ſoul for the ſake of court favour. Would to heaven that, like them, Juſtinian had never bent himſelf to enſlave the privilege of thinking! But, alas! he ſuffered himſelf to be involved in controverſies which can never be ended, and which gave him more trouble than all his illuſtrious labours. For what were the conſequences? Seditions, revolt, and maſſacres. His own quiet and that of the ſtate was undone.

'The tranquillity of the ſtate,' ſaid the emperor, 'depends upon unity of ſentiment.'—'The expreſſion is equivocal,' replied Beliſarius, 'and the conſtant ſource of miſtake. The minds of men are never in better harmony than when each individual is at liberty to think for himſelf. Do you know whence it is that opinion is jealous, arbitrary, and intolerant? It is owing to the fatal error of ſovereigns, in thinking the ſpeculative opinions of mankind of high importance to the ſtate, and diſtinguiſhing one dogmatical party with the moſt partial favours, in prejudice and total excluſion of all the reſt. No man is willing to be marked out for contempt, proſcribed, and ſtripped of all his civil rights. Whenever a ſtate is divided into two factions, and one of them engroſſes all the advantages of the community, the other, whatever be the cauſe of diſſenſion, will think itſelf aggrieved, and the love of their country will give way to reſentment and ſourneſs of ſpirit. The moſt frivolous object will become grave and important, as ſoon as it influences the peace of ſociety. It is that influence, and not the thing itſelf, which inflames the temper of party. Let a controverſy be raiſed concerning the grains of ſand on the ſea-ſhore; to that controverſy annex a degree of influence upon the condition of the ſubject, and it will be managed with as much heat and animoſity as any other queſtion. Religious fury is, for the moſt part, compounded of envy,

fierce deſire, ambition, pride, hatred, and fanatic vengeance, that tyrannizes with zeal, as if it were commiſſioned by heaven: and all theſe complicated paſſions are the gods of which ſovereigns are made implacable delegates. Were there nothing to be gained on earth by waging war for heaven; were zeal for truth to be deprived of a pious licence to murder all who differ about an hypotheſis; were religious enmity no longer allowed to riſe upon the ruins of the man it hates; were it reſtrained from enriching itſelf with the ſpoils of the oppoſite ſect, and gaining undue honours and preferments; the ſpirits of mankind would ſoon be compoſed, and all the various parties would be left to dogmatiſe after their own faſhion.'

'And ſo the cauſe of God would be abandoned,' ſaid Juſtinian.—'The cauſe of God,' replied Beliſarius, 'wants no enthuſiaſts to ſupport it. Is it owing to polemical divinity that the ſun riſes, and the ſtars glitter in the firmament? Truth ſhines with its own pure genuine luſtre, and the underſtandings of men are not enlightened by burning the faggots of perſecution. The actions of mankind are committed by heaven to the juriſdiction of ſovereigns; but to judge of the inward ſentiment is a right reſerved for the great ſearcher of hearts. That truth has not choſen princes for its arbitrators will be perfectly plain, if we conſider that not one of them is exempt from error.'

'If the liberty of thinking,' ſaid the emperor, 'muſt not be limited, the liberty of acting will ſoon claim the ſame immunity.'

'There can be no danger of it,' replied Beliſarius: 'it is in that reſpect that man is under the immediate controul of the civil power; and while that power confines itſelf within the limits of law and natural juſtice, it will have the leſs occaſion for force to maintain its own dignity and the good order of ſociety. The baſis of authority is juſtice; remove the latter and the former falls to the ground. I want to know by what arts of illuſion is mortal man to deify himſelf, and induce his fellow creatures to be duped by the monſtrous apotheoſis to ſuch a depth of infatuation, as to let him, ſword in hand, command

mankind

mankind to believe what he believes, and think what he thinks? Aſk the commanders of the army, whether the logic of the ſword has ever convinced the world? Bid them tell you what were the effects of violence and rigour againſt the Vandals? I was in Sicily; Salomon arrived in the extremity of deſpair: "All is over in Africa," ſaid he; "the Vandals have revolted: Carthage is taken, and they have committed the vileſt ravage; within the walls and round the country all is a deluge of blood; and this horrible confuſion is owing to certain polemical zealots, who do not underſtand themſelves, and of courſe never can be reconciled. If the emperor will mix himſelf thus in abſtract ſophiſtry, and publiſh his edicts in ſupport of ſubtilties which he does not comprehend, let him put his irrefragable doctors at the head of his armies: for my part I reſign; they have driven me beyond all patience." Thus that brave man declared his ſentiments: between ourſelves he was in the right. There are paſſions enough incident to human nature for the diſquiet of the world, without having the torch of diſcord lighted up by fanaticiſm.'

'And who,' inquired the emperor, 'ſhall quench the flames of diſcord?'—'The nature of the human mind will quench the flame,' returned Beliſarius: 'for caſuiſts will grow tired at laſt of ſkirmiſhing about propoſitions men cannot underſtand, and cavilling about diſtinctions none have leiſure to attend to. At firſt, indeed, new-fangled opinions excited curioſity, and that curioſity encouraged the eagerneſs of diſputation. Take away from controverſy all importance in the eyes of the world, and it will ſoon be out of faſhion: men in that caſe will endeavour to diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſomething different from an idle hypotheſis. I compare theſe polemical bigots to a ſet of champions in the public games, who would embrace one another in perfect good humour if left to themſelves; but being gazed at by the multitude, they cut one another's throats.'

'To avow the truth,' ſaid Tiberius, 'his reaſonings have almoſt convinced me.'—'What troubles me,' ſaid the emperor, 'is, that upon this ſyſtem the zeal of a prince can render no ſervice to religion.' 'Heaven

'Heaven preſerve me,' returned Beliſarius, 'from doing that miſchief. I leave him the ſureſt means of reſerving the intereſt of religion, by making the ſoundneſs of his faith appear from the purity of his morals; and by holding forth the tenor of his government as an evidence, and indeed as a pledge, for the truth that governs his actions. By making men happy it is eaſy to make proſelytes. A good and upright king has a more powerful empire over the hearts of men than all the pious friends of perſecution collected together. It is indeed eaſier and more expeditious to cut men's throats than to perſuade them: but if bigot kings were to raiſe their voice to the Moſt High with this queſtion, "What arms would you have us employ to make you adored upon earth?" and if God would deign to make himſelf heard, the anſwer would be, "DISPLAY YOUR VIRTUES."

As ſoon as the emperor's ſpirits, which had been much agitated by this inquiry, grew calm again in the ſilence of retreat, he recalled to mind the maxims and the counſels of the religious ſectaries that ſurrounded him; their enthuſiaſtic violence, their pride, and unrelenting animoſity. 'What a contraſt,' ſaid he, 'has Beliſarius exhibited! A man grown grey in battle, and yet breathing the ſweetneſs of humanity, meekneſs, and benevolence! whereas the miniſters of the God of peace preach nothing but imperious arrogance and implacable rigour! The old hero is at once pious and juſt: he loves his God, and wiſhes to ſee him adored by all; he only requires that the adoration offered up ſhould ſpring from ſentiment and free-will. Alas! I have given way to a falſe zeal, which, at the bottom, was no better than a rage to tyrannize over the human underſtanding.'

CHAP. XVI.

AS the emperor and Tiberius went the next day to re-viſit the hero, they encountered a danger which they had not foreſeen; and the glory of delivering them was reſerved by heaven as one triumph more to crown the fame of Beliſarius. The

The Bulgarians, who had been chaſed no farther than the foot of the mountains in Upper Thrace, no ſooner perceived their country free from their purſuers, than they ſpread themſelves again over the face of the land. One of their detached parties was prowling in queſt of prey near the retreat of Beliſarius, when a carriage appeared and promiſed a rich booty. They immediately hemmed it in; intercepted the two travellers, and made them priſoners. As they ſurrendered all they had without heſitating, the plunderers ſpared their lives. But for their liberty a ranſom, not in their power to pay down, was expected, and therefore they were led along in captivity.

But one way of eſcaping out of their hands without being known occurred to the emperor.—'Conduct us,' ſaid he, 'to the place whither we were going: there we ſhall be able to procure the ranſom you require. I will anſwer with my head that you have no ſurpriſe to apprehend; and if I break my word, or give you reaſon to repent confiding in me, I agree to forfeit my life.'

The air of candour and majeſty with which theſe words were uttered made an impreſſion upon the Bulgarians.—'Whither would you have us lead you?' inquired the Bulgarian chief.—'About ſix miles off,' anſwered the emperor, 'to the retreat of Beliſarius.'—'Of Beliſarius! what! do you know that illuſtrious hero?'—'Moſt aſſuredly I do,' ſaid the emperor, 'and I dare count upon him as my friend.'—'If that be the caſe,' replied the Bulgarian, 'you need be under no apprehenſion: we will accompany you thither.'

Beliſarius, on the firſt notice of their arrival, imagined they came to carry him off a ſecond time; and his daughter, with tears, with ſhrieks, and the utmoſt conſternation, claſping him in her arms—'My father,' ſaid ſhe, 'oh! my father! muſt we part again?'

In this inſtant word was brought that the court-yard was filled with an armed force that ſtood in formidable ranks round a carriage. Beliſarius made his appearance: and the chief of the Bulgarians immediately accoſting him.—'Illuſtrious hero,' ſaid he, 'here are two men who claim

claim an acquaintance with you, and call you their friend.' —'What are their names?' ſaid Beliſarius.—'I am Tiberius,' ſaid the young man; 'and my father is made a priſoner with me.'—'Oh, yes, I know them,' exclaimed Beliſarius; they are my neighbours, and my good friends. But you that lead them hither, by what right have you laid hands on them? Who and what are you?'—'We are Bulgarians,' ſaid the chief, 'and the right of war is our claim. But every thing gives way to the eſteem we have for you. We ſhould but ill ſerve a prince who honours you, if we failed in reſpect to thoſe whom you acknowledge. Thou wonderful man! your friends are free, and to you they are indebted for their liberty.'

At theſe words the emperor and Tiberius made an effort to raiſe their arms and embrace Beliſarius: the hero felt the chains which reſtrained them.—'And how,' ſaid he, 'your hands bound in captivity!' and he unfettered them immediately.

Aſtoniſhment, joy, ſurpriſe, and wonder together roſe and throbbed wildly in the boſom of Juſtinian. 'Oh, virtue!' ſaid he to himſelf, 'powerful virtue! what an irreſiſtible empire is thine! A poor blind old man, ſurrounded with wretchedneſs, commands reſpect from kings! wreſts the ſword from the hands of barbarians, and frees from chains the man who—Gracious God! if the univerſe beheld the ſhame that covers me! Alas! it would be too mild a puniſhment.'

The Bulgarians were deſirous to return the booty they had ſeized.—'By no means,' ſaid the emperor; 'keep it all as a gift, and reſt aſſured that I ſhall alſo add the ranſom we had ſtipulated.'

The Bulgarian chief, in taking leave of Beliſarius, aſked if he had any commands for the king his maſter.'—'Tell him it is my conſtant prayer to heaven,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'that ſo valiant a prince may be the ally and the friend of my ſovereign.'

'Oh, Beliſarius!' exclaimed Juſtinian, 'now recovered from his confuſion and ſurpriſe; Oh, Beliſarius! what an aſcendancy have you gained over the hearts of men! The very

very enemies of the empire eſteem and love you!'—'Do not wonder,' ſaid the hero with a ſmile, 'at the intereſt I have with the Bulgarians. I am upon good terms with their king; and but a few days ſince we ſupped together.'—'Where was that,' ſaid Tiberius?—'In the king's own tent,' replied the hero; 'I forgot to mention that adventure. As I was on my journey hither I was, like you, made a priſoner, and conducted to the Barbarian camp. Their king gave me a generous reception, entertained me handſomely, and lodged me for the night under his own pavilion: the next day I obtained from him a guard to convey me ſafe back to the place where I fell into the hands of a roving party.'—'How!' ſaid Juſtinian, the king of Bulgaria know you, and not detain you with him!'—'He was inclined to do it,' returned the hero, 'but his deſigns and my principles did not correſpond with each other. He talked to me of taking my revenge. Who? I revenge myſelf? a mighty cauſe indeed, for involving a whole country in flames! I returned him thanks, as you may imagine, for the offer of his aſſiſtance; and now, you ſee, he has conceived an eſteem for me!'

'Oh! what remorſe, what eternal bitter remorſe for the ſoul of Juſtinian,' ſaid Juſtinian himſelf, 'ſhould he ever know to what a cruel exceſs his ingratitude has been carried! Where ſhall he find a friend like you whom he has thus baſely injured? Alas! he is unworthy of any man's regard after this outrage, this horrible injuſtice!'

'Do not exaggerate the matter,' returned Beliſarius; 'feſter not the wounds of an aged emperor, but rather reſpect his years and his misfortunes. He was ſurpriſed into that proceeding againſt me, and I will give you a little hiſtory of that buſineſs. There are three remarkable æras in the progreſs of my ruin. The firſt was my entry into Carthage. Being maſter of Gilimer's palace, the uſe I made of his throne was to convert it into a tribunal of juſtice. In ſo doing, my intention was to give weight and dignity to the laws: my inward ſentiment was not legible to common eyes; and when a man ſees himſelf on a throne, he will naturally enough have the appearance of trying

trying how he likes it. That was an indiſcretion: but it was not the only one I committed. A very whimſical kind of curioſity prompted me to dine at Gilimer's table, after the faſhion of the Vandals, and I was ſerved, in the uſual manner of that court, by the officers of the king. It was concluded that I had a mind to ſucceed to the vacant throne, and appearances gave ſome colour to it. A report of this ſoon reached the imperial palace. In order to counterwork the effect of it, I deſired to be recalled, and Juſtinian recompenſed my fidelity by a magnificent triumph. Gilimer, with his wife and children, together with all the accumulated treaſure which for a ſeries of years the Vandals had raviſhed from the nations round them, adorned the ſplendid pomp. The emperor received me in the circus, and when from the throne, on which he was elevated amidſt the acclamations of a people almoſt without number, he ſtretched forth his hand to his ſubject with that air of majeſty and ſweetneſs, my heart exulted within me, and I ſaid to myſelf, "This day's example will be productive of many heroes:" Juſtinian knows the art of kindling emulation and inflaming the mind to glory; the honour of ſerving him will now be a prize contended for. But, alas! the triumph which was to enſure proſperity to the prince, began already to prepare for me a reverſe of fortune! From that very moment envy ſtood with her bow bent againſt me.

'A courſe of victory for five years together, it is true, made it neceſſary even for envy to keep ſome meaſure of decency; but, provoked at laſt beyond all patience by the ſucceſs that attended me, ſhe dared to ſhew herſelf openly without any ſenſe of ſhame.

'The Goths were chaſed out of Italy, and had thrown themſelves into Ravenna: I laid ſiege to the place. It was their only refuge; and there pent up, it was impoſſible for them to eſcape. Envy whiſpered to the emperor that Ravenna was impregnable, that his army would all periſh before the town, in purſuit of my ſchemes of vain-glory; and in conſequence, when the Goths were upon the point of ſurrendering, ambaſſadors from Juſtinian arrived with proffered

proffered terms of peace. I ſaw that the emperor had been impoſed upon, and I thought it would be treachery on my part to loſe the opportunity of making Italy our own: I therefore declined to ratify the conditions of peace; the town capitulated, and I was accuſed of treaſon and revolt. The charge had ſome foundation, as you perceive, for I had been guilty of diſobedience; and there was ſtill ſomething more in it. The enemy were diſaffected to the king, and made me a tender of their crown. A peremptory refuſal might imbitter their minds; I returned a flattering anſwer, and that ſeeming acquieſcence was deemed ſincere at court. I was recalled, and the prompt obedience with which I laid down the command diſconcerted my enemies. To the emperor's feet I led that very Gothic king whoſe crown I was ſaid to be ambitious of. This time a triumph was not allowed me. I felt myſelf ſorely mortified on the occaſion. I do not mean to ſay that I was humbled in the ſight of the people: far from it; my retinue had ſufficient pomp, and the acclamations of the public, who preſſed in crowds about me, would have ſatisfied a more aſpiring vanity than mine. But the cold reception I met with from the emperor more than hinted to me that he was not undeceived, and that a latent ſuſpicion was in ſecret ſtill at work againſt me. Unluckily the impreſſion made upon his mind was not a little aggravated by the enthuſiaſtic admiration of the people, whoſe idol I had the misfortune to be.

'And now, in a diſpaſſionate manner, put yourſelves in the place of the emperor; conſider the prejudices that had been infuſed into his heart. Should not you have been piqued at the praiſe which reproached yourſelf? Do you think the ſuppoſed ambition of a ſubject, extolled to the very ſkies, would not have given you umbrage? Should you not have ſeen with ſpleen and reſentment a whole people, wild with joy, and in the tranſport of their hearts taking revenge againſt yourſelf, even to a malice of enjoyment, by giving me a popularity ſuperior to the triumph that had been refuſed? Could you have ſhut your ear to the whiſpers of a court commenting upon the inſult offered

to majeſty, by the tumult of applauſe that followed Beliſarius? My good neighbour, the greateſt prince is but mere man; they are all jealous of their power and their ſplendour; and if Juſtinian had not had vigour enough to ſubdue the little paſſions of his heart, and to pardon the merit which provoked him, it would have been by no means a matter of wonder. And yet the emperor did conquer his jealouſies: he controlled the weakneſſes of vanity and ſuſpicion, and once more confided to me the command of his armies and the defence of the ſtate. But another incident occurred, which gave a bias to his judgment, and made me the object of his fixed averſion.

'I had finiſhed my career; and Narſes, who ſucceeded me in Italy, alleviated all the pains of my own inactivity by the victories he obtained over the enemies of my country. In this ſituation, I imagined I had nothing left but to cloſe the laſt ſcene of life in tranquillity; when of a ſudden the Huns made an irruption into Thrace, and ravaged all the country round. The emperor deigned to recollect that I was ſtill in being, and in my old days I was charged with the command of an expedition, by the event of which the empire was ſaved from ruin. I covered my grey hairs and the furrows of my forehead with an helmet cruſted over with ten years reſt. Fortune proved favourable, and I repulſed the Huns, who were advanced within a few miles of the capital. I laid an ambuſh for the enemy, and it ſucceeded ſo well, that I was regarded by the people as a guardian god. The whole city at my return was one wild uproar of joy and exultation, to ſuch a degree, that I was much alarmed at the fatal conſequences which I then foreſaw: but how to appeaſe the violence of the populace? The emperor was old, and age brings infirmities with it. The honours paid me by the multitude, and the exceſs of applauſe that run throughout the city, were underſtood by Juſtinian as marks of diſaffection, plainly indicating that his ſubjects were tired of his reign, and wiſhed to ſee him abdicate his throne in favour of the general who defended it. Miſtruſt and jealouſy took poſſeſſion of him;

him; and, without alledging any thing againſt me, he judged it right to remove ſo dangerous a man from his preſence.

'While I paſſed my time in obſcurity, a plot againſt the crown was diſcovered, and the conſpirators, without detecting their principal, died in the agony of torture. But the ſilence of thoſe unhappy men was interpreted by my enemies, and calumny furniſhed out a copious ſupplement. I was ordered into confinement; diſcontent ſpread among all ranks of men, till at length, touched with compaſſion for all my ſufferings, the people expreſſed their feelings without reſerve. Pity was ſoon inflamed to indignation, and, by a general revolt, the emperor was compelled to give me up to the clamours of my country.

'In depriving me of my eyes I am perſuaded he thought he was diſarming an enemy. That I was never diſaffected to him heaven can bear me witneſs; but heaven, that reads the hearts of men, has not given that power to princes. You accuſe the emperor of ingratitude and injuſtice, but it was his misfortune and not his crime to believe appearances, which perhaps would have miſled your judgment in the ſame manner.'

'Yes, he is miſerable, the moſt miſerable of men!' ſaid Juſtinian, throwing his arms about the hero, and claſping him in his embrace.

'What means this burſt of anguiſh?' inquired Beliſarius.—'It is the agony of a heart ready to break,' ſaid Juſtinian. 'Oh, Beliſarius! that unjuſt maſter, that barbarous tyrant, who rent your eyes from their ſockets, and reduced you thus to miſery and want, in bitterneſs of ſorrow and repentance now embraces you, and throws himſelf thus upon you with all the compunction of ſenſibility and love.'

'Thou my ſovereign!' exclaimed Beliſarius.—'Yes, I am he! Oh, my friend! my deliverer! my protector! Yes, thou beſt of men, yes, I am that unhappy prince, who has ſet the world an example of the baſeſt cruelty and ingratitude. Let me thus, proſtrate at your feet,

be humbled to that depth of lowneſs which my guilt deſerves. I here forget my crown, diſhonoured as it is by the vileſt crimes; I am unworthy to wear it longer. Nothing now befits me, but thus to bathe the duſt under your feet with my tears, and hide my opprobrious head thus overwhelmed with ſhame and infamy.'

'And will you thus,' ſaid the hero, ſupporting his maſter, who was almoſt ſuffocated with ſighs and tears, 'and will you thus,' ſaid Beliſarius, folding the emperor in his arms, 'abandon yourſelf to deſpair? Shall the ſenſe of a paſt error take away the power of atoning for it? Oh, my maſter, you are plunging yourſelf in ſhame and diſtraction, as if you were the firſt man deceived by appearances, and ſeduced by calumny! Tho' your error were even a crime, yet why degrade yourſelf thus? Wherefore be humbled to an abject wretch, a thing vile and abhorred? You are my ſovereign ſtill: reſume your ſtrength, nor let the recollection of an unguarded moment rob you of a due reverence for yourſelf, and the true ſpirit of virtue. In this conſternation of your heart, reflect upon all the good you have done mankind before that unhappy moment, and let the remembrance of that ſupport you. Beliſarius is indeed blind; but twenty nations by you are delivered from the yoke of barbarians; the calamities of the empire are all repaired by your princely beneficence; and thirty years of glorious ſtruggle for the good of mankind have proved to the univerſe that Juſtinian was not a tyrant. Beliſarius is blind; but he forgives you: and if you deſire to repair the injury you have done him, the means are eaſy and in your power. Grant me only one of the many prayers and vows I offer up for the peace of the world, and I am more than indemnified.'

'Come then,' ſaid the emperor, ſnatching him again to his heart, 'come and teach me to expatiate my guilt! Come and exhibit it to my perfidious court in all its ſtriking colours: and let your preſence, while it is a living memorial of my crime, be a proof of my repentance alſo.'

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In vain did the hero uſe every intreaty to be left in ſolitude: to appeaſe the anguiſh of the emperor's mind, he was obliged to comply with his requeſt, and promiſed to accompany him.

Then Juſtinian, adreſſing himſelf to Tiberius—'Oh! what a debt, what an unſpeakable debt do I owe thee, my friend? What recompenſe can equal the ſignal ſervices thou haſt done me?'—'It is true, my ſovereign, you are not rich enough,' replied Tiberius, 'to recompenſe me. Leave it to Beliſarius to make me retribution. Poor as he is, he is yet maſter of a treaſure which I prefer to all yours.'

'My only treaſure is my daughter,' ſaid Beliſarius, 'and I cannot diſpoſe of her better.'

At theſe words he called for Eudoxa. 'My daughter,' ſaid he, 'fall on your knees to your ſovereign, and ſolicit his approbation of your nuptial union with the virtuous Tiberius.'

At the name and ſight of Juſtinian, the firſt emotion of nature in the heart of Beliſarius's daughter was mixed with dread and horror. A ſudden ſhriek burſt from her; ſhe ſtarted back, and turned aſide.

Juſtinian advanced towards her—'Condeſcend, Eudoxa,' ſaid he, 'to liſten to me; deign to look upon me, and you will ſee me almoſt drowned in tears; in tears that guſh from the keeneſt anguiſh, and will never dry till I deſcend to the grave. Not this copious ſtream, not all the good I have done, can blot out the memory of my guilt: but Beliſarius has pardoned me; and now Eudoxa, now prove yourſelf his daughter by following his example.'

To ſee the lovely Eudoxa given in marriage to Tiberius was a degree of conſolation to the emperor; and from that moment he felt his heart warmed with the ſoothing pleaſures of innocence.

A more unexpected revolution never diſconcerted the intrigues of a court. The arrival of Beliſarius threw them into trouble and conſternation. 'Behold,' ſaid Juſtinian to his courtiers, 'ſee here again the hero; behold

hold this upright man whom you made me condemn.—Tremble ye cowards! his innocence and his virtues are now manifeſt to me, and your lives are at his diſpoſal.' Paleneſs, grief, and ſhame, covered every viſage. In Beliſarius they thought they beheld an inexorable judge; they dreaded him as a vindictive and terrible god.

The hero continued to ſupport the ſame modeſt reſerve that adorned him in diſgrace. He never deigned to recognize any of his accuſers; and, honoured to his death with the emperor's confidence, he made it his ſtudy to obtain an amneſty for the paſt, and to inſpire his maſter with a vigilant attention to the preſent, and an awful ſeverity to control all future crimes.

But he did not live long enough for the good of mankind and the glory of his maſter. The emperor, quite enfeebled and diſpirited, contented himſelf with ſhedding a few tears to his memory, and the counſels of Beliſarius died with himſelf.

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